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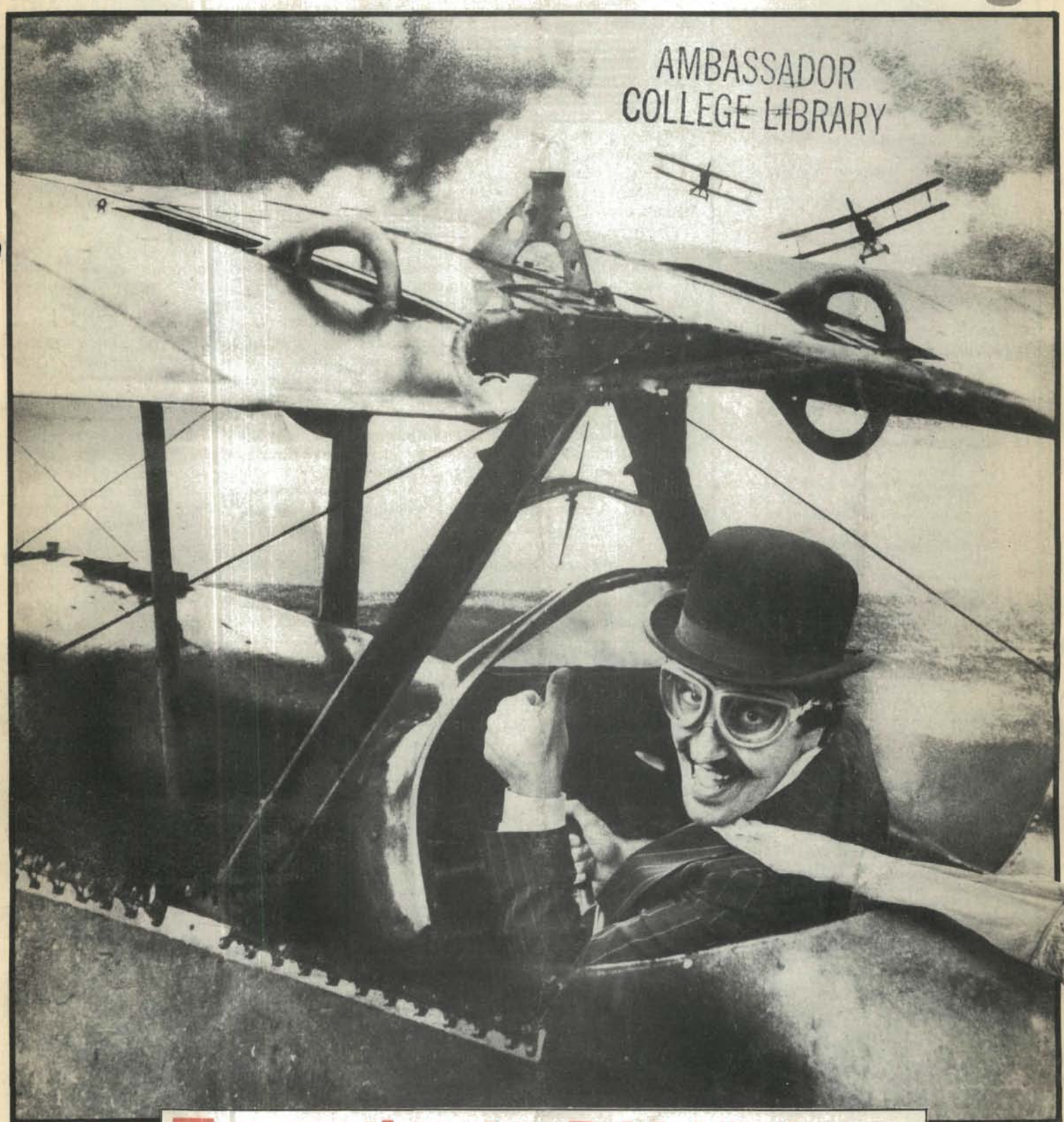
NEW STATESMAN

Dawn raids at the stock exchange



The new threat to British industry

Report from Afghanistan

Three hundred children felled by nerve gas

Can the unemployed be organised?

What the Treasury thinks of Thatcher's monetarism

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 100 8 August 1980 No 2577

Contents

2 **Leader & Notes**
4 **An open letter to Sir Henry Fisher:** Christopher Price MP
5 **The truth behind the collapsing children:** Judith Cook
6 **Will TUC organise the unemployed?** Patrick Wintour
7 **Land hunger in Zimbabwe:** David Ward
8 **Monetarism under the microscope:** Dr Jeremy Bray MP
9 **Bumper year for bankruptcies:** Meghnad Desai
10 **Eating British industry for breakfast:** Christopher Hird
12 **Afghanistan's sweet-toothed invaders:** Anthony Hyman
13 **Soviet attitudes to Islam:** Bohdan P. Nahaylo
14 **London Diary:** Tariq Ali
15 **Letters & Roger Woddis**

A suntanned Arthur Marshall will be back next week

Books & Arts

16 **Revising the history of the Spanish civil war:** Paul Preston
17 **Gay Talese's view of sex in the world today:** Gillian Wilce
18 **Stuart Holland's view of the Common Market:** Kerry Schott
19 **Science and technology in the USSR:** Fred Steward
20 **New novels:** Simon Blow
Investigating detective writers: Francis Wheen
21 **The British seafarer on the air:** Anne Karpf
22 **Discussing writing about war:** Robert Hewison
23 **The Suicide:** Christopher Edwards
24 **From Airport! to Airplane!:** John Coleman
Weekend Competition
25 **Chess and Crossword**

Poems by William Jay Smith, Ron Butlin and Teresa Morley
Cover photo montage: Michael Bennett

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The poverty of theory

WILLIAM RODGERS, David Owen and Shirley Williams are a trio of highly seasoned Right-wing activists. They have had infinite leisure to polish their phrases and refine their thoughts since the Callaghan government (of which they formed such pillars) came to grief. They come forward at a time when the Left is in considerable difficulty and disagreement about strategy and principle. They enjoy, like all their predecessors since Gaitskell, a fair wind blowing continuously from Fleet Street. Given all these advantages, the utter poverty of their joint effort is a disgrace to political debate at any standard.

Their conceited manifesto is an easy prey for two kinds of criticism. The first is for what it does say, and the second is for what it does not. The first criticism is very much easier to mount, because the 'open letter' contains very little to provoke thought, and obviously demanded very little of its authors.

When William Rodgers was campaigning for George Brown to lead the Labour Party, things were relatively simple. There was room for growth in the economy; the Conservative Party had surrendered to some part of the social democratic consensus; the international situation was dominated by the comparatively genial Kennedy and Khrushchev. None of these things still holds — but William Rodgers would apparently still like a George Brown to lead the Labour Party. He need hardly allege any conspiracy if he finds himself almost alone in this desire.

The Left is in confusion because it is dealing with the consequences of several Labour governments over whose policy it had no control. The wreckage is all around us — a declining Labour vote, a falling party membership, a dishonest relationship with the trade unions, a mutually odious quarrel with the European Economic Community, a costly and subservient attitude to the foreign policy of the United States, an uncontrolled arms race and a poisonously hypocritical posture towards the Third World. Many of the current Left solutions to these large and small questions are simplistic and naive. But at least they have some sense of urgency about them. The noises from the Right are as complacent as ever, and as cynical.

Come the party conference in the autumn, and the only 'social democrat' who matters is Terry Duffy. Forget the drawing-room preferences of the three 'intellectuals'; they will be as irrelevant as yesterday's *Guardian*. What will count, as it counted under Gaitskell, will be the traditional infighting ability, and the willingness of Rodgers *et al* to make alliances with anti-Labour forces, and the undemocratic block vote.

Robin Cook pointed out in these pages recently that William Rodgers has written only one statement on defence policy while holding Labour's portfolio — and that was an attack on party policy. What finally turns the scale against the 'Gang of Three' is the number of topics on which they are silent. Their generalities about 'Thatcherism' are as nothing to the virulence with which they attack the Left.

If they want to be taken seriously, they must make themselves clear on what they propose (except the status quo) instead of public ownership. And on what they propose (except the status quo) *instead* of the Common Agricultural Policy, the Trident missile system, the civil service veto and the House of Lords. When they have done this, they will be as 'courageous and outspoken' as they now think they are. And it will be clear which party they ought to belong to.

NOTES

Another taste of hospitality

David Holmes writes: To compound the misery and confusion they have endured since requesting admission to Britain as students last February, Chosen Nkala and Maxine Tshuma have over the last week been confined in Harmondsworth Detention Centre while immigration officials quibbled over arrangements for their removal to Zimbabwe.

As anticipated in last week's *New Statesman*, Chosen (18) and Maxine (19) left Ireland on Friday after Irish Minister of Justice Gerrard Collins refused them permission to stay and continue their studies. At the time, they were engaged on a secretarial course prior to beginning 'A' Level studies in Dublin in September.

Immediately on arrival at Heathrow they were detained by immigration officers acting upon instructions from Timothy Raison's department at the Home Office. They were refused temporary admission pending removal unless their aunt, Miss Ivy Nkala, could produce confirmed bookings for the first available flight to Zimbabwe. In that event, 'reconsideration' would be given to their admission. If confirmed bookings could not be shown, the girls would remain in detention until the airline responsible for bringing them to Britain arranged a flight for them. It is not clear whether this would be the responsibility of Aer Lingus, who flew the girls over from Dublin, or Swissair, who originally brought them here from Zimbabwe.

To book flights for the girls would cost Ivy Nkala at least £600, as their original cheap-charter return tickets — which have been held by immigration officials since their arrival here — have now expired. She has already spent several thousand pounds in fighting the girls' case and providing for their upkeep, and has no more cash readily available. She has therefore, had to leave the girls in detention.

The girls were originally refused entry to Britain by immigration officials at Heathrow because, in their opinion they were not suitably qualified to study here, and had neither the means to do so nor the intention to return to Zimbabwe afterwards. Labour MP Bob Hughes intervened to prevent their immediate return to Zimbabwe and urged Timothy Raison, Secretary of State at the Home Office, to reconsider the case in the light of fresh evidence.

Despite strong evidence that the girls satisfied the criteria for admission, Mr Raison refused to exercise his discretionary power to overrule the decision. He has not acknowledged an accountant's statement that Miss Nkala was capable of providing support and accommodation for the girls, and has assumed the girls have no incentive to return to Zimbabwe, despite signed statements that they intend to do so.

When the girls flew to Ireland to appeal against the decision they did not realise they were in breach of their temporary admission to this country. Although they were admitted to college there, they were returned to Britain as a matter of course under the common travel agreement between the two countries.

A plea to Lord Carrington to intervene while the girls were in Ireland drew the reply that the Foreign Office were impotent as long as the girls remained outside British jurisdiction.

They must return now to Zimbabwe to begin again the long search for a place to continue their

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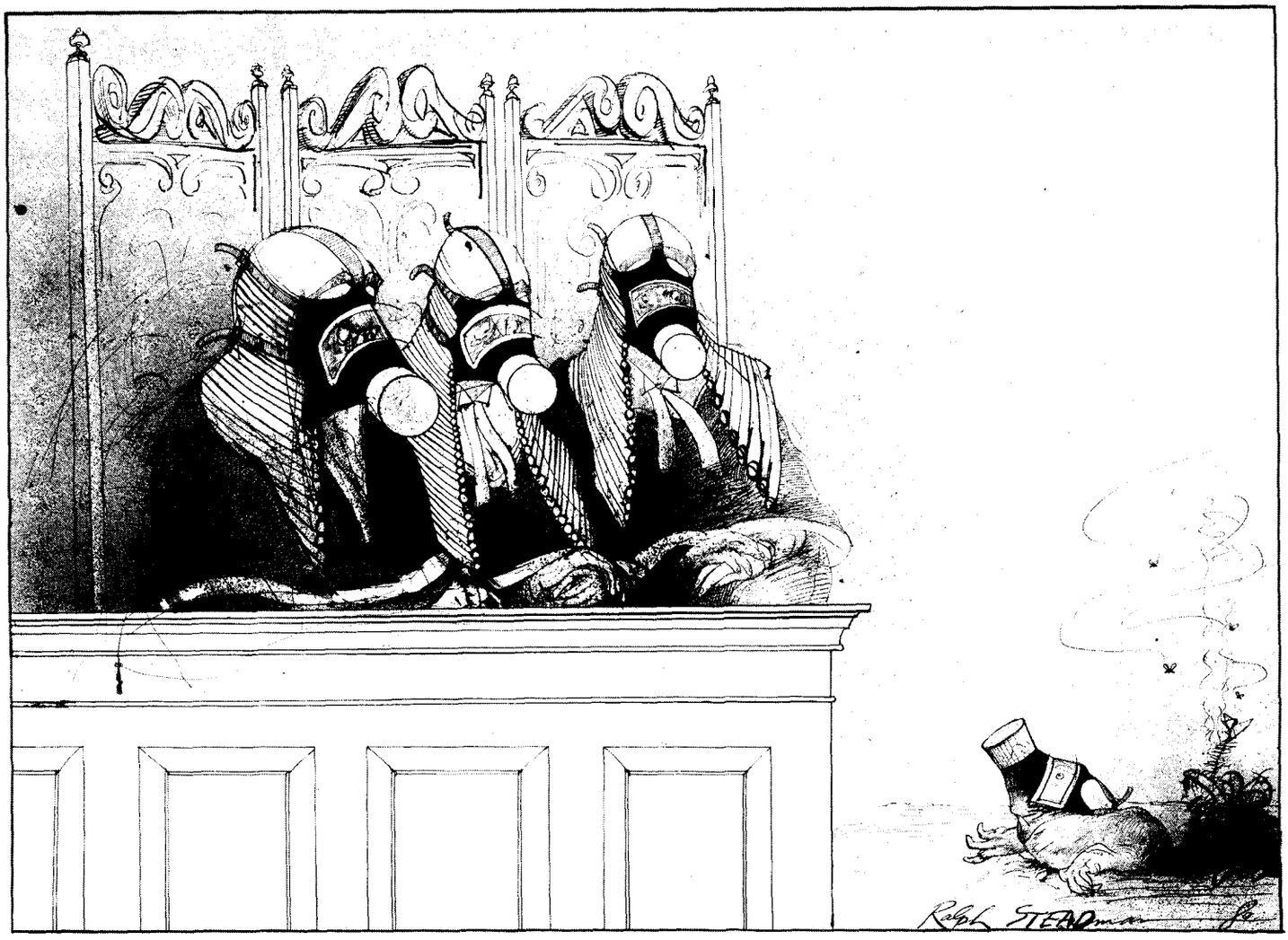

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education. Understandably they feel bitter and angry towards Britain, as does their aunt, who has for the past 20 years worked as a nurse in the NHS, and is now questioning the worth of her contributions to the British exchequer. 'This affair has cost me my work, my sleep, and my money, and at the end of the day we have got nothing,' she said last week.

Austria's new deal

Christopher Hitchens writes: In the *New Statesman* of 23 May I wrote an article about Bruno Kreisky's Austria, which argued that it was not the shining example that Denis Healey and others have made it out to be. Among the points I stressed was 'Austria's dirty little secret' — her profitable trade in arms for the Third World. A large number of readers wrote objecting to my tone. So I just thought I would mention that the government of Austria has approved the sale of 100 light tanks and 300 machine guns for Chile, at the handsome price of $166m. And that a further 34 tanks are being sold to the government of Bolivia. The tactless timing of the latter deal has aroused some concern in the Socialist Party and elsewhere. It will be interesting to see what happens.

South Arica moves into North Sea oil

Martin Bailey writes: BP's £428 million take-over of Selection Trust could give Harry Oppenheimer's Anglo American Group access to North Sea oil. South Africa's largest company would then gain an important entry into the international oil trade, and this would undoubtedly strengthen the apartheid regime against the threat of oil sanctions. It was, after all, an Anglo American associate — Freight Services Ltd — which played a key role in the Rhodesian sanctions-busting operation.

The largest shareholder in Selection Trust is Charter Consolidated, which owns 26 per cent of Selection. Charter itself is a major member of the Anglo American Group. Although Anglo holds only 36 per cent of the shares in Charter, the relationship is intimate. As the Anglo annual report explains: ties between the two companies are 'close and historic', and the link is 'broader than a purely financial one'.

The politically sensitive aspect of BP's take-over of Selection is that the purchase will be not simply in cash but also in BP shares or even a direct stake in BP's North Sea operations. BP's Managing Director Robin Adam has admitted that payment to Charter might involve 'a small part of the Forties Field', and stockbrokers James Capel have described the possibility of obtaining access to North Sea oil as 'the cherry on the cake as far as Charter was concerned'.

Anglo American's possible acquisition of North Sea Oil interests through Charter could well be dwarfed by a new 'oil for silver' deal that has just been concluded in Canada. This bizarre arrangement developed when two silver speculators, the Hunt Brothers, found themselves unable to pay for $665 million worth of silver which they had pledged to buy. One of the largest contracts which the Hunt Brothers had been unable to honour was with Engelhard Minerals and Chemicals Corporation, and as part of the settlement the Hunts have given Engelhard a 20 per cent interest in exploration permits they held in the Beaufort Sea.

The Beaufort Sea, off Canada's Yukon Territory, has been described by Engelhard's Chairman Milton Rosenthal as a region having 'the potential of being the largest single oil-producing area outside of Saudi Arabia'. At present Beaufort is still only at the prospecting stage, but already Engelhard has indicated that it is considering exchanging its 20 per cent interest in Beaufort for other oil properties which have reached production. This would give Engelhard immediate access to crude oil.

Engelhard Minerals and Chemicals is closely tied in with South Africa's Anglo American Corporation. The Bermuda-based Minerals and Resources Corporation (Minorco) — in which Anglo American and its associate Charter Consolidated hold a 60 per cent share — has a 32 per cent stake in Engelhard. So Engelhard's expansion into oil will give Anglo American — and South Africa — a greater stake in the international oil trade.

Union row on abortion and the closed shop

Mary Holland writes: Last week, in the High Court in Dublin, the National Union of Journalists agreed that it would abide by an interim injunction restraining it from 'blacking' the copy of a member of the Institute of Journalists, William Quirke. The NUJ's counsel asked for the case to be postponed to the autumn because, he said, the injunction raised extremely important matters for his clients.

Some indication of the emotions aroused by the inter-union dispute may be gauged by a letter sent by the National Secretary of the IOJ to an officer of the NUJ: 'If your members continue to black us,' it warned, 'we intend using the pulpits of Ireland to get over our message on the NUJ abortion motion. Think it over!!'

The NUJ has long endorsed the TUC's policy on abortion, i.e. support of a woman's right to choose and an active campaign against any erosion of the present British legislation, such as the now defunct Corrie Bill. The policy appears to have attracted no attention in Ireland until this year, when the union's national conference was held in Northern Ireland.

For weeks before the April conference, branches in the Republic were rent with bitter arguments about the right to life, alien British influences and the propriety of belonging to a union which condoned murder. There were even some resignations, which were widely publicised. Afterwards, many of

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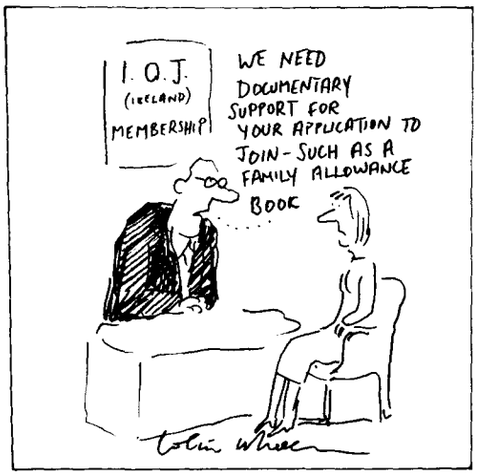
I.O.J. (IRELAND) MEMBERSHIP
WE NEED DOCUMENTARY SUPPORT FOR YOUR APPLICATION TO JOIN - SUCH AS A FAMILY ALLOWANCE BOOK
Colin Wheeler

the Union's 2,000 Irish members were still so deeply unhappy about the policy that it was decided to hold a special delegate meeting of the Irish members in July. The President and the General Treasurer of the Union came from London to attend and to argue forcefully that if Irish members disagreed with Union policy their duty was to stay in the union and campaign against it. A motion was passed, overwhelmingly, to initiate a campaign 'to ensure that all references to abortion are deleted from the union's policy at the next annual delegate meeting'. One motion, proposed by a woman, which defended a woman's right to choose, got precisely eleven votes in its support.

The Institute of Journalists has seized on the abortion issue as a (literally) heaven sent opportunity to revive its moribund Irish chapter — and this could lead the NUJ into a larger controversy over the closed shop, with wide implications for the whole of the Irish trade union movement. The Union's summertime deliberations on the case of Mr William Quirke will therefore be of vital importance.

Mr Quirke, who resigned from the NUJ over the abortion issue last May, is employed by the *Wexford People*, one of the few places where the NUJ has achieved a closed shop agreement. Representatives of the Union say that, despite the closed shop, the chapel on the *Wexford People* would almost certainly have turned a blind eye to Mr Quirke's resignation, had it not been for his well publicised decision to join the IOJ. It was at this stage that the Union instructed its members to black his copy.

For its part the IOJ has been swift to make the maximum propaganda use of the case of Mr Quirke, whom it is wont to describe as a 'pro-life journalist'. The IOJ's Chairman Chris Underwood has visited Ireland to explain his Institute's attitudes, particularly in relation to the closed shop. At a meeting in Limerick, opened by the Mayor of the city, Mr Underwood told his audience that the IOJ intends taking the issue of the closed shop to the European Court of Human Rights. The Institute has also retained a barrister for Mr Quirke, who has made it clear that he intends to fight the NUJ on the grounds that its action in refusing to handle his copy infringes his constitutional rights. At the interim hearing the judge agreed that the case raised extremely important constitutional issues with regard to the closed shop.

Bus cuts reach the stockbroker belt

Mick Hamer writes: Margaret Starling is 92. She uses London Transport's 201 bus to travel half a mile into Thames Ditton. The bus stops right outside her home, a block of flats for the elderly and disabled. On Saturday 27 September the 201 bus will run for the last time. In one fell swoop all three of London Transport's services in the Thames Ditton area will be axed. A private operator will take over part of the 201 route, which has a half-hourly service at the moment. The new service will be a handful of buses between the hours of 10.00 and 4.00 pm on weekdays, no good for getting to work or for Saturday shopping.

I asked Margaret at the bus stop what she would do when the bus route was cut. 'Don't say it's true. We shouldn't be able to get to the village'. Her 91-year-old husband can't walk further than the bus stop. And Margaret herself has had three falls recently.

The Thames Ditton cuts are the first instalment of a series of bus cuts all over Surrey. In March, under pressure from the Government to cut spending, Surrey decided to lop 20 per cent off its bus subsidy, saving £¼ million this year and £1 million next year. The effects of the cuts are particularly severe in Thames Ditton: the town will effectively be stripped of its local public transport. Yet Thames Ditton is not an isolated village; it is part of Surrey's densely urbanised stockbroker belt.

South Korea's consensus

Donald Kirk writes: South Korea's military strong man, General Chun Tu Hwan, closed 172 publications last week for 'instigating social confusion and creating a mood of class consciousness'. He is now forcing news organisations to fire journalists who have resisted censorship. At the same time he is 'purifying' the educational system by ordering the dismissal of hundreds of 'poisonous' teachers.

Chun is not actually President — that honour belongs to a bland yes-man called Choi Kyu Hah — but he is busily revising the constitution in order to remedy this state of affairs. A senior official from Chun's hand-picked 'Constitution Amendment Committee' came up with a splendid justification for Chun's behaviour: the absence of an election, he explained, 'is desirable to prevent waste of national energy and to seek national consensus'.

A further move to 'achieve national consensus' (in other words frighten off the opposition) is the trial later this month of the regime's most popular political opponent, Kim Dae Jung, who is accused of fomenting the May riots. Once Kim is out of the way there should be no further obstacle to Chun's presidential ambitions.

Chun has also consolidated his power by appointing himself chairman of an amorphous military-dominated group called the 'Standing committee of the special committee for National Security Measures'. Chun often appears in civilian clothes these days, receiving visitors in his capacity as 'chairman', a title that he clearly prefers to his other ones of Army Security Commander and Acting Director of the KCIA. At the age of 47 he has risen so quickly that hardly anyone outside the military elite is familiar with his career as an intelligence officer, but officials now confidently predict that he will be President before the year is out. 'The form of government,' said a sympathetic diplomatic observer, 'is not so important as the question of whether the man in power is regarded as legitimate.' Or, to put it more accurately, whether the man in power has the weapons with which to destroy those who might for one moment question his legitimacy.

Christopher Price

Open Letter to Sir Henry Fisher

know, you could have done it.

But, of course, we didn't: we had no more motive to do it than the three boys – who didn't do it either. But you still feel after three months in judicial surroundings amidst the civilised pirouettes of well-paid

My dear Sir Henry,

YOU MAY REMEMBER I last wrote to you in January 1978, just after you had declared that two of my constituents, Ronald Leighton and Ahmet Salih, were 'on balance of probabilities' implicated in the murder of Maxwell Confait and the arson of his house — a murder and arson of which Lord Scarman had declared them innocent. I said you were wrong then; now Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney General, agrees with me.

It is true of course that Sir Michael had before him evidence which you did not, evidence which might even have led to the prosecution of Confait's real murderer; but all the corroboration for this new evidence came from material already available to you, the police and the lawyers. It now seems that Confait, when found, had been dead for two days; yet you found the discolouration of Confait's body, which an eminent forensic pathologist insisted could only emerge after two days, simply 'puzzling'. You overruled it. You opted instead for your more likely scenario: that broadly the police were telling the truth and two of the three boys were lying. You took the view the law commonly assumes — that the working class (especially those with previous convictions) lie and the middle class tell the truth. You will remember you were particularly impressed with Detective Superintendent Stockwell — the officer who took down the 'confessions':

> (he) gave his evidence convincingly and made a favourable impression on me. He has a frank and open manner; he seemed calm, steady, careful and intelligent (as his posting to the Fraud Squad indicates); I judged him to be wholly trustworthy

The three boys, particularly Colin Lattimore and Ronald Leighton, did not have a 'frank and open manner'; they were instinctively suspicious of that £205,250 inquiry, with its gaggle of five QCs and six juniors, all moving with practised ease amidst the decaying splendour of the old United Services Club in Pall Mall; and their instincts have now been proved to be as right as yours were wrong.

Indeed you were, it seems, as guilty as the police and the lawyers and the pathologists of that psychological phenomenon known as 'closure' — to which we are all to some extent subject and which was described so carefully to you by Mr Barrie Irving of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. You had made up your mind without realising it, and so you concentrated on the wrong facts: a dead man in a burning house and three confessions — all neatly typed out on official police stationery. Try as you might (and try you did) you could not break out from the closed assumptions of your experience, your horizons, your class. 'On balance of probabilities' the youngsters (or at any rate two of them) were guilty; the alternative — in terms of the behaviour of honest looking policemen, the fabric and practice of the law, the whole weight and meaning of words spoken — was too terrible to contemplate.

I hope you will agree, in retrospect, that it was not a very *objective* finding. You have now made something of a profession of objectivity, as an arbitrator for the worlds of law and business; and simultaneously you manage to be President of a college in a famous University, dedicated to the pursuit of Truth. But the irony of the Confait case is that Truth has not been served by an expensively educated and rewarded elite, by judges or barristers or consultant pathologists or even by yourself — a veritable Solon — Britain's most eminent arbitrator. It has been served by luck, by fate, perhaps and certainly by a couple of dedicated policemen who earlier this year pursued Truth, even though it meant the exposure of Metropolitan Police behaviour. In the event, they have both done the reputation of the Met. a power of good.

Your findings were made in a 'Return to an Order of the House' — in other words, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege. Had they not been so made, they would now be open to action for defamation. In all the circumstances, especially recent ones, I think it might have been more comely and generous of you to have associated yourself with Sir Michael in his statement to the House on Monday; as it is, I trust the Home Office will now fill that gap by fully and amply restoring to Ronald and Ahmet — and to Colin Lattimore, the third young man you half exonerated — that proper financial compensation of which your findings so unjustly deprived them nearly three years ago.

Christoper Price

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HEALTH
Judith Cook

Pesticide based on a nerve gas may have caused hundreds to collapse

Aftermath of a mass poisoning

THERE IS NOW STRONG EVIDENCE that the children who collapsed during a marching bands festival at Hollinwell just outside Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, on 13 July, were poisoned by an agricultural pesticide based on nerve gas. This raises disturbing questions about the extent — and advisability — of the pesticide's use on British farm land.

Officially, the case is closed. The hospital authorities say all tests on the children proved negative. The local council, Ashfield, states firmly that no trace of any foreign substance could be found on the field where the children were afflicted. Both sides are happy to put it down to mass hysteria — or, as a hospital spokesman told me: 'Perhaps emotional stress would be a better phrase for it.' But emotional stress cannot explain one or two uncomfortable facts. Some of the children and adults who were involved in the festival were still suffering recurring bouts of the same illness, when I visited them two and a half weeks after the event. And hospital papers, removed by an enraged parent, show a diagnosis of 'inhalation of organic poison'.

Before unravelling the evidence, it is necessary to list the symptoms exhibited by those worst affected. These include contraction of the pupils of the eyes, blurred vision, muscular weakness, especially in the legs, and acute pain in the abdomen and chest. Some casualties experienced burning sensations when passing urine; most felt sick and some, especially adults, have had recurrent diarrhoea. The sickness affected a baby as young as 12 days, a number of adults, a couple of dogs, a horse and more than 300 children. Some of the victims were tested to establish whether they were suffering from food poisoning, or from contact with an agricultural chemical. They were found to exhibit symptoms which exactly resembled those caused by poisoning from contact with organophosphorous compounds — nerve gas derivatives of which more than 50 brands are currently used as pesticides on British farms.

These OP mixes, as they are commonly known, affect the passage of the nerve impulses from the brain to the muscles. The action of muscles is controlled by a substance known as cholinesterase, which breaks down the substance acetylcholine into two parts, acetic acid and choline, thus enabling the muscle to relax. OP mixes inhibit this process, causing the muscles to go into spasm and, when the whole body is affected, producing symptoms similar to those seen at Hollinwell. In larger amounts, the OP mixes can destroy the central nervous system and kill. It is also possible that another type of nerve gas, similar but more lethal, may have been the cause — as a result of chemical dumping at Hollinwell: this inhibits the effect of cholinesterase and so produces identical symptoms, but it is not an organophosphorous compound. Tests to discover one of these two gases would show negative when only the other was present.

PARENTS OF SOME OF THE CHILDREN who collapsed at Mansfield are convinced that the official explanation is false and are determined not to let the matter rest. One of them is Mansfield factory worker Michael Hunt, whose two children had eye trouble, passed out, went blue around the mouth and suffered severe pain. Two weeks later the younger one, Cheryl, aged nine, developed the same symptoms again: when I met her she was complaining of nausea and pains in her legs. I was struck by how listless she was — not at all like a normal, healthy child at the beginning of the school holidays. Her father, who had developed a similar illness the day after the festival, was still suffering from stomach pains and diarrhoea.

Twelve-year-old Elizabeth May of Kilton, Worksop, woke up feeling sick and unable to walk three days after the event. Eight members of the Peacock family were affected, including Mrs Peacock, her 12-day-old baby, four children aged between five and 11, and two adults in their 40s. There are many, many more instances, of which Michael Hunt and other parents are compiling a dossier.

The casualties were taken to a number of hospitals, where they received widely varying treatment. At Kilton Hospital, Worksop, the worst sufferers were given injections. 'Nobody told us what they were or what they were for', says Michael Hunt. A friend of his, whose daughter, Debra Saunders, had to be readmitted to hospital a few days later, inspected the doctor's diagnosis sheet (No. A/E 47884) which was hanging at the end of the bed. It said 'inhalation of organic poisoning'. Terry Bingham, an adult who collapsed at Hollinwell and who was far from happy at being called an hysteric, steamed open the letter which the hospital gave him to pass on to his GP: it contained the same diagnosis.

The hospital authorities now say that tests for organophosphorous compounds were carried out on some children, and proved negative. And the local authority says that no traces of the OP mixes were found in the Hollinwell field. However, a senior biochemist, formerly associated with Porton Down, the government's research centre for chemical warfare, has informed me that even

if the OP mixes had been present in the soil on the day of the festival, they might not have been detectable a few days afterwards. They oxidise very quickly and it is while they are doing so that they are at their most toxic; they then disappear without trace. It would, in any case, have been necessary to know exactly where to look for them. Parents are convinced that one particular area was to blame — near where all the children had to get out of the coaches — and they believe this area may not have been tested at all.

Local hospitals carried out blood tests on only a handful of those who had been affected. They might have picked up traces of an OP compound if it had been of a reasonably well-known type. But if it were one of the more sophisticated OP mixes — and most certainly if it were one of the non-OP cholinesterase inhibitors — then, according to my source, it would have taken a first-rate analyst, working in first-rate conditions, some weeks to trace. There is probably only one place in the country capable of doing such tests — and that is Porton Down.

Twenty milligrams of such a substance to a body weight of 70 kilos would prove fatal, but as little as 0.3 parts of a milligram would have been sufficient to produce the symptoms exhibited in these cases. The effect would have been instantaneous and probably absorbed through the eyes; but so small a quantity would have been almost indetectable in the blood.

THE QUESTION REMAINS, if a nerve gas derivative *was* responsible for what happened at Hollinwell, how did it get there? There are plenty of rumours. Some say the field was once a toxic dump, but there are no records of this anywhere, nor do local people bear it out. One of the St John's ambulancemen who was present at the festival remembers seeing crop spraying from a helicopter at 6 pm on 6 July in that area. Aerial spraying of OP mixes is not recommended — especially over built-up areas; but neither is it banned. There is also the possibility of illicit dumping by a chemical waste disposal firm: this has certainly happened before and the Hollinwell field would have been ideal for it.

Parents point out that when Ashfield council carried out its investigations, it failed to

Nerve gas pesticides on sale in Britain

Brand names of Organophosphates (Other names, including trade names, in brackets)

Azinphos-Methyl (Guasathion, Guthion) 3PL;
Chlorfenvinphos (Burlane) 3P;
Demeton S Methyl (Metasystox, Azotox, DSM, Demetox, Duratox) 3P;
Diazinon (Basudin, Diazitol, Neocidol, Nucidol) 3P;
Dichlorvos (DDVP, Nogos, Nuvan, Vapona, Dedevap) R;
Demethoate (Agrichem/Campbells, Hoechsts etc. Dimthoate, Rogorn Cygon, Dimetate) R;
Malathion (Malaston, Malathiozol, Cythion Phosdrin) 2L;
Parathion (Foxfex, Fosferne, Niran, Bladan) 2PL;
Phosphamidon (Dicron, Dimecron) 3P;
Phorate (Thimet) 2.

Other OPs include Carbophenothion, Chlorpyrifos, Demephion (3), Dimefox (1), Disulfoton (2), Dioxathion (3), Fentrithion, Fonophos (2), Menazon, Mephosfolan (2), Methadathion (3), Omethoate (3), Oxydemeton-Methyl (3), Phosalone, Phosphamidon (3), Primiphos (3), Pyrazophos Thionazin (2), Thiometon (3), Trichlorphon, Vamidthion (3)

Key

UK regulations
1: Use full protective clothing and respirator.
2: Use full protective clothing and face mask.
3: Use full protective clothing only when applying.
P: Covered by Poisons Act 1933.

USA
R: Use being reviewed by US Environmental Protection Agency.
L: Use limited to trained workers.

Information supplied by NUAAW

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call either parents or members of the St John's Ambulance Brigade as witnesses; and at least one member of the investigating committee, Dr Lewis of Mansfield Hospital, was already committed to the hysteria theory. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the authority had any intention of 'covering up' the cause of the mass collapse: it simply failed to *uncover* the cause.

Eventually it may turn out that the recurring illnesses were due to some other cause — as yet undiagnosed — and that there was no chemical poisoning. But that will not solve the problem of the continuing use of OP mixes on British farm land. The National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers points out that contact with infinitesimal amounts of an organophosphorous compound can cause mental confusion, drowsiness and difficulty in concentration. Having sent out a questionnaire to its members to gather information on 245-T, it is discovering from the results that agricultural workers are at least as worried, if not more so, by the use of OP pesticides.

TRADE UNIONS
Patrick Wintour

Divisions in TUC about organising the jobless

Who speaks for the unemployed?

DESPITE THE TRADITION of Tom Mann, Wal Hannington and Harry McShane, the British trade union movement has always been a movement of workers. The unemployed have been excluded: out of sight and mind. But since February the TUC has been thinking (slightly laboriously) of changing that. Two of its major committees, Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare and Employment Policy and Organisation (EPOC), have been considering this summer what action to take to assist the unemployed. Both the transport workers' union and ASTMS have motions before next month's Congress calling for some form of unemployed organisation. The executive of the General and Municipal Workers' Union is to discuss the issue later this month. A TUC consultative conference is planned for the autumn.

Currently, for every six workers affiliated to the TUC, there is one unemployed. Major unions such as the TGWU are suffering falling membership and income. The G&M, for instance, has a freeze on recruiting new staff. The AUEW has just had to secure a major bank loan. Organising the unemployed will not save unions money — quite the opposite — but falling membership after years of growth has brought home to the unions that their campaigns for reflation of demand and for greater work sharing have not been conspicuously successful. The Tories are now attacking the status of the unemployed by eradicating earnings-related benefit, reducing the numbers entitled to benefit, and cutting the real value of unemployment benefits. And yet no single pressure group exists to defend the interests of the unemployed.

Divisions on the issue have already emerged. According to an internal TUC document some feel that if the TUC were to organise the unemployed, it 'could imply acceptance of high unemployment as a permanent feature'. But Barry Sherman, research officer of ASTMS, insists that the trade union movement can no longer afford to ignore the unemployed: 'The real problem is how do you bargain for them? You can hardly blackmail the government with the threat they'll start working.' Some union leaders see it all as a cosmetic exercise of tightening up existing union representation. Others, such as ASTMS, say that structural changes in the labour market call for a new form of unionism which not only bargains about the social wage but also provides such services as employment training and advice on legal rights. The TUC's current inquiry into its own structure, ASTMS argues, provides a convenient occasion for such a shift.

Overhanging these discussions is the TUC's abysmal record in the Thirties when unemployment became a battleground between the communist-led National Union of Unemployed Workers and a moribund TUC which eventually blocked any official co-operation with the NUWM. Already, TUC leaders have been involved in major rows with the 'Right to Work Campaign', run by the Socialist Workers' Party, over its antagonistic lobbying of TUC conferences. But the Right to Work march which is planned for this year's Tory Party conference has attracted a wider group of sponsors than previous ones: the TUC's inaction is leaving a gap which the far Left are inevitably filling. Significantly, one of the TUC's internal documents on assisting the unemployed draws attention to 'the possible growth of racist and extremist organisations among the young unemployed if the trade union movement does not take an initiative'. Extremist the SWP may be, but it has a point if it says there can be an underlying conflict in the trade union movement between those in and those out of work. The unions, hitherto, have looked after the interests of the former, although this week the TUC finally submitted to the government its proposals for job creation.

THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES to the unemployed have been discussed so far by the TUC. The most conservative, supported by Sir John Boyd, general secretary of the AUEW, is that unions should retain and service their own unemployed members. This is something that craft unions, in particular, do already: a union card is often kept by the skilled worker as the only passport back into a trade where there is a closed shop. But the AUEW is no longer exclusively a skilled union and sacked unskilled workers probably leave the union rapidly, even though membership is free to an unemployed person. Certainly, few unions whose members are predominantly unskilled manage to keep their members for long, even though they provide special rates at 2p or 5p a week. For one thing, few unions provide any reason for the jobless to stick around.

The second proposal being discussed within the TUC is that a special TUC section be set up for the unemployed, perhaps through TUC regional councils. The third and most radical proposition is that special local organisations for the unemployed, outside both individual unions and current TUC organisations, be set up and allowed to affiliate in some way to the TUC.

According to internal TUC papers, this third approach would involve 'the General Council assisting and supporting the establishment of special organisations for the unemployed such as the Claimants' Union and the Unemployed Workers' Union in the North East which could then affiliate to the TUC'. In a special survey of 27 affiliated unions, the TUC found some support for this idea — as it did from trades councils. However it was pointed out that a scheme of this kind had been launched unsuccessfully by one trades council in Essex. During the Heath recession, a similar project involving trades council sub-committees for the unemployed did succeed — until unemployment improved.

The Social Insurance Committee came down heavily against setting up special organisations: they 'might be seen as alternatives to the trades union movement and might come into conflict with the policies and actions of affiliated unions on occasion'. The Employment Committee was less nervous about the idea.

The Tyneside-based Union for the Unemployed, set up by the Newcastle Trades Council three years ago, denies that it conflicts with established unions. Indeed, it goes to great lengths to persuade its members to remain active in their own unions if possible. As its slogan 'Agitate, educate, organise' suggests, the Union provides more than a 'drop-in' for the unemployed. The Centre for the Unemployed and the Union give some of the 160,000 jobless in the area advice on their rights in housing, social security and employment training. Members leaflet careers offices, explaining how school leavers can get unemployment benefit. They also leaflet unemployment offices, arguing the case against closures of local plants such as Consett and explaining that the steel recession has not been caused by excessive wage settlements. Chris Edwards, organiser of the Unemployed Centre, says the outfit tries to work through existing unions and to suggest to them, politely, that they have an obligation to their past and future members as much as to their current ones.

> But we also campaign outside the unions in local communities, forewarning them of the consequences of a particular factory closing in their area, and publicising what it's really like to live on dole money. We try local campaigns against the council on issues such as concessionary leisure rates for the unemployed, as well as trying to stop unemployment money being handed out only fortnightly instead of weekly.

Currently, there are three branches of the Union. Its central Durham branch is made up almost entirely of workers sacked after the closure of Courtaulds Spennymoor. Both the National Union of Dyers and Bleachers (which refuses to have unemployed members) and the AUEW pulled out after the closure. The highly experienced former AUEW convenor now helps run the branch. Middlesborough trades council is planning another unemployed union, and on Merseyside the TGWU has decided to keep its own branches open for the unemployed in places like Speke. A similar venture has begun in Greenwich, South London.

ONE OF THE TUC's fears is that it might unleash dozens of such active centres around Britain and then be unable either to control

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them or to give them any real access to the democratic structure of the TUC. Some feel such centres would be ripe for 'take-over' by the far Left: as the TUC paper points out, only about 16 per cent are on the dole for more than six months. (The NUWM found in the Thirties that it was extremely difficult to attract the short term unemployed and skilled workers.) Nevertheless, the wording of the TUC document reveals a lingering attraction to the idea of such centres:

> A possible advantage of TUC recognition of such organisations for the unemployed would be a clearly recognisable indication of concern for the unemployed.

The TUC paper admits doubt about the second option: could the TUC regional councils 'cope with the task, size and difficulty of organising TUC provision for the unemployed with anything like their present resources'? TUC regions cover large areas, and the dangers of members existing on paper only are obvious. The TUC says only the appointment of large squads of new officials or volunteers from the ranks of the unemployed could prevent this. Fortunately one thing unemployed people have plenty of is time. But with cuts in MSC services and job centres, and reductions in benefit, an effective regional staff with real contact at local level would need to be very large. The abolition of earnings-related benefit means, for instance, that more workers will soon be going straight onto supplementary benefit. And as the TUC paper points out: 'Supplementary benefit claims and assessments are more complicated and more individualised than unemployment benefit and can require more extensive assistance'.

The very size of the task at hand makes Sir John Boyd's option seem attractive. If the buck were passed back to individual unions, unemployed workers would at least avoid being ghettoised, or cut off from the real power of organised workers. Equally, though, it can be argued unemployed members' interests are likely to be ignored at a branch meeting where most are still employed. The TUC's questionnaire revealed that 'unions generally did not have information about numbers of their unemployed members', which suggests that unions are not doing a great deal for these folk. Moreover, the TUC paper says that very few unions allow unemployed people not previously in the union to join simply because 'they normally work in the relevant area of employment or have a relevant qualification'. In other words, young unemployed such as school leavers, mothers seeking employment for the first time and sacked non-unionised workers would remain unorganised. But these are some of the groups most likely to need help. The Social Insurance Committee recommended guidelines and special changes in union rules to make unemployed and previously non-unionised jobless eligible for membership. But even if such guidelines could be drawn up without causing inter-union disputes, would unions then make strenuous efforts to recruit these members at rates of 2p a week? If they did, would they be able to provide a service good enough to keep them?

ZIMBABWE
David Ward

'You don't buy a country. You take it.'

Land hunger still unfed

THE FAILURE of the British government to honour its side of the Lancaster House agreement by supplying finance for land redistribution in Zimbabwe is causing acute problems for Robert Mugabe. As his finance minister Enos Nkala warned in a recent budget speech: 'It must be obvious that lasting stability cannot be achieved if the land question is pushed aside.'

At Lancaster House, the Patriotic Front Alliance reluctantly conceded the principle of paying 'compensation' to dispossessed white farmers, on condition that finance for land purchase would be forthcoming. Lord Carrington indicated that an 'African Development Bank' would be established with Britain supplying the initial capital and encouraging 'wider Western support'. As yet, nothing whatever has been done to meet this commitment — an omission Nkala describes as 'profoundly disappointing'. Not only is it causing a crisis within Mugabe's government, but it is also bound to stimulate a desire to scrap the Lancaster House agreement altogether.

Following his reassurances to white farmers, Mugabe himself seems prepared to honour the constitution, despite the lack of finance. But can he contain the feelings of the African community? Politically, the land issue is explosive. An average 'European' farm covers 2,290 hectares, compared with only 24 hectares per black farm. The Tribal Trust Lands, which make up the majority of African farm land, currently contain about 675,000 farming units; and the proprotion of land being cultivated is 17 times more than is ecologically desirable. Yet it is reliably estimated that some 5.8 million hectares of 'European' land is unused or underused — 40 per cent of all white commercial land.

In a recent Senate debate, the Minister for Lands and Resettlement, Dr Sydney Sekermayi, was outlining the details of compensation payments when he was interrupted by Chief Rekayi Tangwena: 'Since when do you buy a country?' he demanded. 'You take it.' The 72-year-old Tangwena seems almost to personify the land issue, having sustained a defiant and well-publicised campaign against the forced removal of his people from their traditional homeland at Inyanga near the Mozambique border. For ZANU, whose election slogans included 'Let us recover our land', the point he was making was clear.

Voices of dissent have also come from within the leadership of ZANU. The Party's Secretary General and Minister for Manpower, Planning and Development, Edgar Tekere (who was held by the police this week after the shooting of a white farmer), has threatened that the Lancaster House agreement could become 'a scrap of paper' and that they would not be held to ransom by past commitments. His words contrast sharply with those of the Prime Minister and are certainly music to African ears. Nor can they be interpreted as an opportunist attempt to secure grass roots support. As Secretary General, Tekere enjoys a powerful influence and has long been a confidant of Mugabe; they were in detention together and travelled secretly to Maputo to reorganise the liberation struggle after ZANU's internal disputes in 1975.

Tekere's belligerence tends to be supported by a distinct group within ZANU's Central Committee which has frequently swayed Mugabe's thinking, notably in the decision to split from the Patriotic Front. ZANU's leadership has a reputation for being highly collective, with Mugabe acting as a consensus chairman. Now that ZANU is in government, conflicting Ministerial statements suggest that a rivalry is developing between the Cabinet and ZANU's Central Committee. Claims that the Central Committee is the highest decision-making body have caused consternation among whites, although it's an obvious consequence of the election outcome. The coalition Cabinet, if it managed to gain (and retain) control of decision-making, would be more conciliatory, and would honour the constitutional requirements.

ADDING WEIGHT to the radicals' argument are the recommendations of an UNCTAD economic survey, *Zimbabwe, Towards a New Order,* which was presented at a recent aid conference in Salisbury. This remarkable 200 page document, which was prepared at the request of the Patriotic Front Alliance prior to Lancaster House, calls for major land reforms. It suggests that

> in order to create adequate power of decision over land distribution, a land reform legislation may need to be based on the principle of vesting ownership of absolute freehold title to all lands in the government on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe . . . no land reform policy would be effective without the dissolution of the tripartite system of land tenure (Tribal Trust Lands, African Purchase Areas & European Areas) and the associated institutions.

The report's proposals are said to be 'broadly in line with Government thinking', despite the fact that Mugabe has ruled out wholesale nationalisation.

Given the acute African land hunger, the dangers of falling into a Muzorewa-style policy of merely expanding the TTLs could prove very costly for Zimbabwe's new leadership, since the rural areas are the key to the country's future. The problem of redeploying the guerrilla forces (the majority of whom are still in assembly camps) is directly related to the land problem — since many will be turning to agricultural work under a guns-to-shovels project called Operation Seed. Furthermore, the unemployment afflicting the industrial sector stems from land shortages which force a move from agricultural to wage labour. Above all, the liberation struggle itself has been a rural one. It is in the countryside that the costs of the war, along with the needs of the people, are at their highest.

One frequently hears about the 'crisis of expectations' among Zimbabweans, a phrase that can be used to belittle and render unreasonable the legitimate demands of the majority. Tekere, in contrast, refers to natural expectations: 'We gave them the example, the leadership, so there is no crisis. They are expecting things to follow their natural course'.

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The truth will out

With inflation still high and unemployment soaring, with Britain and the world plunging deeper into recession, and industries closing down, the all-party Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service has been looking at the foundations of the government's economic policy and asking whether it is appropriate to its task.

To provide a proper framework for the evidence, the Committee sent out a questionnaire to the Treasury, the Bank of England, the clearing banks, the TUC, the CBI, foreign central banks and research workers in the field in Britain and abroad. It asked for their views on the principal objectives of policy (full employment, the balance of payments, inflation and growth); on the role of intermediate targets such as money supply, public sector borrowing and the exchange rate; and on the instruments of policy (tax, interest rates, public spending) and their effects — particularly the effects of interest rates and the public sector borrowing requirement on money supply, and the money supply's impact on the exchange rate, inflation and other principal objectives. Finally, the questionnaire asked how, given this picture of the way the economy worked, policy should be decided. JEREMY BRAY MP, a member of the Select Committee, reports that the Treasury and the Bank of England have had trouble concealing their distaste for Thatcher's policies.

THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE from the Treasury, prepared under the watchful eye of ministers, took up a simple monetarist and essentially political stance. Governments could not ensure high employment, it said. They could only create the conditions in which it could be achieved. Once a government had set its money supply target, which would eventually determine money incomes, it would be up to management and labour to opt for high inflation, low output and high unemployment — or low inflation, higher output and lower unemployment. It wouldn't be the government's fault if things went wrong.

No less loyal was the Treasury's evidence on the instruments of policy and their effects. The money stock, it said, could be controlled by an appropriate combination of fiscal policies and interest rates. The authorities would have some scope, within any one year, to vary the mix of public sector borrowing and interest rates in line with its money supply targets, but this was not a long-term option. On the central question of money supply and inflation, the Treasury evidence baldly stated that there was 'a clear relationship between the growth of the money stock and the rate of inflation in the medium term':

> This is the foundation of the Government's strategy for reducing inflation by means of monetary control. The mechanisms by which the changes in the money stock are transmitted to the price level may be different in different countries and periods of history. They may depend on the methods of monetary control adopted, and they will probably change over time as the private sector's perception of policy changes. But the proposition that prices must ultimately respond to monetary control holds whatever the adjustment process in the shorter term may be.

But the Treasury provided no evidence to back up any of these assertions. Where was the proof of that 'clear relationship'? How exactly did the growth of the money stock affect the rate of inflation? What was it that made a monetary squeeze result in cuts in output sometimes and cuts in inflation at other times? Why precisely would this depend on the way in which the monetary squeeze had been achieved, and on the transmission mechanisms by which wages and prices were affected by money supply? We were not told. In fact, the Treasury's evidence contained not a single number. Nor did it include any estimates of the effects or costs of government policy, although the Select Committee asked a lot of good questions about them.

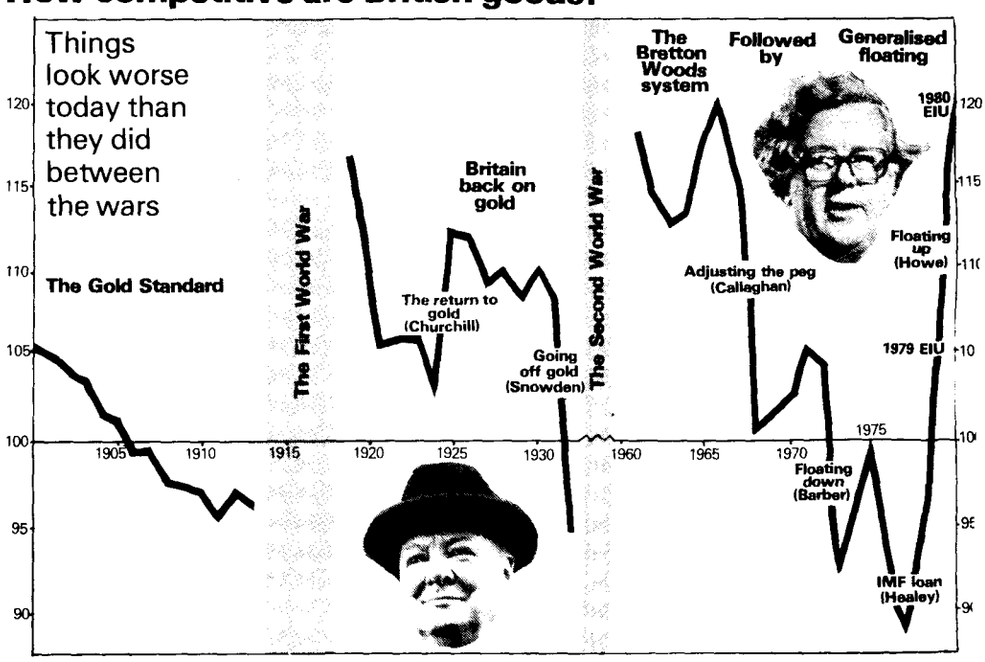
Why was this? Had the Treasury failed to do its homework? Evidently not. A previously published Treasury paper, *Monetary Targets and the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR),* had been submitted earlier to the Select Committee — apparently before Treasury ministers realised its implications. The paper, by Mr P. E. Middleton and other Treasury officials, had been prepared for a conference held days after the 1979 election — and it made use of the Treasury model. (While Treasury ministers have chosen publicly to damn the model, they have just reorganised the work of the Department to continue its use in forecasting and policy analysis.)

According to Mr Middleton, the Treasury model suggests that, with a floating exchange rate and PSBR reduced by £1 billion by increasing VAT, the money supply (£M3) would be 0.5, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.7 per cent lower in the first four successive years; however, prices would be 1.9, 2.7, 3.0 and 3.0 per cent higher, thanks to the impact of VAT. Ministers have often said that the effect on inflation of reducing the money supply had long and variable lags, but they have never admitted that after four years the effect could still be the opposite of what was intended!

Suppose, instead, that the VAT increase were used to balance a cut in income tax, so as to have no effect on the PSBR: the money supply (£M3) would then, according to Middleton's paper, be 0.5, 0.7, 1.1 and 1.2 per cent higher, while prices would be 1.8, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 per cent higher. That looks like a nice tight response of prices to the money supply, yet it has been achieved without any change in the PSBR or in interest rates — the very instruments which ministers think control money supply! As events continue to demonstrate that the Treasury model has a better idea of how the economy works than they do, ministers are at last having to consider the evidence which was ready and waiting when they took office. Nevertheless, with increases in nationalised industry prices and council rents following oil price rises, they are still unloosing great slugs of inflation into the economy in the name of a disinflationary monetary policy. Perhaps if the evidence available to them had served to support government policy, they might have been more eager to present it in detail to the Select Committee.

OF COURSE, ministers can always dismiss the model as unreliable and reassert the government's strategy of a single instrument (money supply) with a single objective (curbing inflation) — which is what the Treasury evidence does. But the truth will out. When

How competitive are British goods?



A rise in the index indicates a fall in Britain's competitiveness. Between 1900 and 1931, the price of a standard package of British consumer goods is compared with its US equivalent; between 1960 and 1980, UK unit labour costs in manufacturing are compared with the weighted average of those prevailing in Britain's international trading partners. The two indices, though not identical, are comparable. In each case, the index shows British prices or costs divided by those of its competitors.

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the Committee was hearing oral evidence from Treasury officials, conservative MP Terence Higgins asked whether he understood them correctly:

> You have a Treasury model which is based on a vast mass of past empirical data . . . There is not any past empirical data on which to justify, if you like, ministerial views as to what will happen in the light of the policy they are now pursuing.

Mr Middleton explained that no model could be expected to predict how people would react to changes resulting from a major shift in government policy. So, of course, the government had not used the Treasury model to decide that it wanted to reduce inflation by pursuing a particular set of monetary policies. The model, Mr Middleton went on, was primarily used for short-term forecasting and for simulations of fairly small changes. It was particularly useful to Treasury officials in helping them to analyse a 'whole mass of issues',

> particularly those concerned with the relationship between the level and composition of expenditure and taxes and the level and structure of interest rates in order to operate a monetary policy at all.

The Treasury model, said Mr Middleton, probably had a closer relationship to 'the world as we experience it' than most economic theories — because the latter tended 'to be based on one theoretical extreme or another'.

> It seems to me the Treasury model gets into the most curious state because it has to justify almost any policy that any Government pursues, and that seems to me absolutely an amazing thing to expect of any piece of machinery stuck in a basement.

Mr Higgins tried another tack. It was agreed, was it not, that the government's current policy did not have any past empirical basis, because it had not been tried before — and to that extent the model was irrelevant? Mr Middleton did not agree.

> You only have to read through the mass of evidence which has been submitted to this Committee to see there is a very considerable body of empirical data on which one can base these policies, data relating to the rate of inflation, to the rate of monetary growth and that sort of thing.

The Chancellor, said Mr Middleton, had promised the Committee a letter in which he would 'set some of this out'. Lots of people were pursuing monetary targets who did not have models of any description: it would be unreasonable to tell them ' "You cannot pursue monetary policies if you do not have a model" '.

In other words, you don't have to have models to pursue monetary policies, but they can be useful if you want some idea of the likely consequences. The letter promised by the Chancellor never arrived: all that turned up was a rag bag of Treasury Economic Progress Reports, published for schools.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND'S evidence was twice as long and twice as good as the Treasury's. But it, too, contained no estimates of the effects or costs of government policy. The Bank's Governor, Mr Gordon Richardson, chose to deal in his covering letter with the principal objectives of the government's economic policy. These were, he said quite properly, matters of policy for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He reaffirmed his belief that the consensus on final objectives should include full employment. But he declared loyally and with conviction that the deterioration in our economic circumstances had made the control of inflation the most urgent objective. The Governor made no distinction between what should be tackled first, and what should be given most weight. Yet dealing with one variable at a time could increase instability if greater distortions were created in other variables than were corrected in the one being tackled. (The evidence of both Bank and Treasury officials showed that a *balanced* persuit of objectives was needed.)

The Bank's evidence said that some intermediate target was needed to set the absolute price level (i.e. the value of money). Intermediate targets need not be precise numbers, but could be rules, or guidelines for responding to unforeseen events. The exchange rate, said the Bank, would be a plausible intermediate target, which could offer more stable competitiveness. However, as the Bank pointed out, money supply and exchange rate targets would be incompatible in the face of something like an oil price shock.

In view of the shattering deterioration in UK competitiveness in the past year and its devastating impact on manufacturing industry, the choice of targets is obviously crucial. The Bank's laconic and historical statement (that we have preferred to operate in terms of money supply as an intermediate target) amounted to the coolest possible support of government policy. On the question of instruments of policy and their effects, the Bank referred, with some insouciance, to Mr Middleton's paper.

The 'clear relationship' between money supply and inflation, which the Treasury claimed to perceive, had escaped the notice of Bank of England witnesses. We confronted them with a chart (reproduced opposite) which shows that Britain's trading competitiveness has deteriorated by 40 per cent in the last two years — an effect *four times worse* than that of returning to Gold Standard in 1925. As it is now 20 per cent worse than the average following the 1967 devaluation, the Select Committee asked whether it would be possible to recover this loss over four years, by UK labour unit costs growing at five per cent per annum less than in competing countries, *without* an adjustment in the exchange rate? Bank officials agreed that it was difficult to imagine such a thing.

The Bank's witnesses said forthrightly that the pound was overvalued and that its present level could not be explained by any theory of exchange rate determination. However, they said, the exchange rate was not an element of the government's policy objectives and therefore the banks did not try to manipulate it. (If the exchange rate *were* an element of the government's policy objectives, something would be done about it, and about the parlous state of manufacturing industry.)

Among much useful evidence to the Select Committee was the West German Bundesbank's description of its own, more intelligent targetry. When West Germany sets monetary targets, it takes into account the levels of unemployment and inflation; when Britain sets monetary targets, it does not.

Mr Middleton, in his unexpurgated paper, written before the election, concluded:

> Fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies must be simultaneously determined in the light of their joint effects on the relevant intermediate and final objectives.

In other words, a government should determine its policies on tax, expenditure, interest rates and exchange rates bearing in mind not only the effect on the money supply, but also the effect on inflation, unemployment, growth and the balance of payments. If the Select Committee helps to rescue the solidly pragmatic Tory Party from the hallucinations of present Treasury ministers before they destroy British industry, it will have done well.

Meghnad Desai

Record level of bankruptcies in 1980

THIS YEAR THERE WILL BE around 5,000 bankruptcies in the UK. The total will probably be higher than ever before and an increase over 1979 of between 45 and 50 per cent.

Very little research has so far been done on the causes or likely incidence of bankruptcy. However, However, certain things are well known. Bankruptcy has to do with the inability of a firm to raise enough quick cash to tide over its debts until the income from its sales comes in. When there is a tight monetary policy, lags between sending out bills and getting in payments become abnormally long. Firms need to borrow, but banks become more discriminating about choosing which to lend to, and the criteria they use often has little to do with the firm's productivity or managerial efficiency. A large firm can raise funds more cheaply and quickly than a small firm. In short, contrary to the beliefs of Thatcher, Joseph & Co. that bankruptcy is the Market's way of weeding out unhealthy firms, it is the financially unfortunate, not the economically inefficient, that go to the wall.

Our research at the London School of Economics set out to analyse the macroeconomic trends in bankruptcy, taking as the main explanatory forces the effects of money supply changes and high interest rates. Variables measuring the rate of inflation of output prices and input prices were also tried. Very little experimentation was required before a plausible econometric specification was arrived at which provided good predictions.

The best equation on these criteria is a simple relationship which explains 93 per cent of the total variation in the number of bankruptcies. The explanatory variables are the growth rate, M3, the average bank rate (MLR) and the previous year's number of bankruptcies. Each percentage point reduction in monetary growth means about 50 extra bankruptcies, while a similar rise in the MLR means 225 extra bankruptcies in the same year. The chain reaction of bankruptcies makes it possible to predict long term effects, too — and these are between two and a half and three times greater. One percentage point decline in M3 growth means 110 extra bankruptcies and a similar rise in MLR means 600 extra bankruptcies. The effects work quite quickly: the average lag is only about two years.

The LSE forecast assumed a 16 per cent average MLR for 1980. For M3 growth, the upper limit of the target, 11 per cent, and the midpoint, 9 per cent, were both considered. On this basis, the predicted number of bankruptcies for 1980 was between 4,500 to 4,600.

MLR	M3 growth	1979 bankruptcies	1980 forecast	% change above 1979
16	11	3126	4560	46
16	9	3126	4635	48

These forecasts do not include bankruptcies in Scotland and Northern Ireland. When some estimate for these areas is added, the forecast is in excess of 5,000.

* For a detailed report, available soon, write to Dilia Montes, FDARC, LSE, London WC2.

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Swooping on British industry

'Dawn raids', Stock Exchange manoeuvres for snapping up large shareholdings in companies (while jobbers make a fortune), are threatening the future of many British firms. CHRISTOPHER HIRD reports.

AT 8.50 ON THE morning of Tuesday 12 February this year Mr Stephen Raven and Mr Michael Cook, partners in Ackroyd & Smithers, one of the major firms of jobbers on the London Stock Exchange, arrived at the offices of Rowe & Pitman, one of the major firms of stockbrokers. They had been summoned there five minutes earlier by Mr Peter Wilmot-Sitwell, one of Rowe & Pitman's partners. Shortly after nine o'clock he was able to tell his visitors that one of his firm's clients, the South African diamond company, De Beers Consolidated Mines, already held 14 per cent of the shares in Consolidated Gold Fields (another mining finance house) and wanted to increase that holding to 25 per cent as quickly as possible.

It cannot have come as much of surprise to the men from Ackroyd to discover that De Beers were big shareholders in Cons Gold. In October 1979 Mr Raven, on a visit to Johannesburg, called at the offices of a South African firm of brokers, Davis, Borkum, Hare. He was told that during the summer of 1979 a substantial number of shares had been bought in Cons Gold on the London Stock Exchange by an unknown buyer; Davis, Borkum, Hare were curious to know how this could have been done. Mr Raven explained.

Shortly after this, on 26 October, Rowe and Pitman started to buy Cons Gold shares through Ackroyd and Smithers. (In the London stock market brokers act on behalf of their clients who wish to buy or sell shares; the jobbers act as the intermediaries through whom virtually all this business is conducted.) Ackroyd knew that Rowe & Pitman's clients were the South African broking firm of Davis, Borkum, Hare; but they were not told the ultimate buyers. In fact, these were companies associated with Anglo-American, the mining finance house run by Mr Harry Oppenheimer; they included De Beers, and Rowe & Pitman had been advising them for many years. The South Africans were very keen that their buying should be as inconspicuous as possible. Rowe & Pitman were asked not to buy Cons Gold shares aggressively but to take only the shares offered to them. They were to impose absolute secrecy upon the buying order and the people behind it. Throughout the following months very few people in Rowe & Pitman knew what was going on.

It is no easy thing to keep such an operation quiet in the London stock market. It is easy for dealers on the market floor to see when one particular firm is a big buyer, and this can easily provoke a flurry of rumours, speculative demand for a share and thus a higher price. In addition it is possible, in time, to spot a large shareholder on the register of shareholders which companies keep. To avoid drawing attention to what was going on, Rowe & Pitman and Ackroyd & Smithers decided upon the following strategy.

The brokers placed a buying order with Ackroyd, but without specifying how many shares were to be bought or at what price. Each day Ackroyd were to deal with buying and selling orders from other brokers in the normal way, but aiming to end up the day as net holders of Cons Gold shares, which they then sold to Rowe and Pitman. The attraction of this scheme was that if skilfully executed it meant Ackroyd could acquire shares by stealth.

However, a problem remained: when a shareholder sells part or all of their shareholding they must complete a transfer form, showing the name of the new owner of the shares. Unusually, Rowe & Pitman asked Ackroyd to send them transfer forms with the buyer's name left blank. The brokers then filled in the name of the buyer — a nominee company provided by Davis, Borkum, Hare — and then sent the transfer forms off to South Africa. This scheme had the advantage of restricting even further the number of people who knew the identity of the ultimate buyer of the Cons Gold shares.

Finally, when the South African brokers received the transfer forms, they did nothing with them. The normal procedure would have been for them to send them off to the company's registrars so that the new ownership could be recorded and the new owners could exercise their voting rights.

The raider: Harry Oppenheimer of De Beers (left). His victim: Lord Erroll of Consolidated Goldfields (right).

THIS SYSTEM WAS NOT, in fact, completely fool proof. It soon became known in the stock market that Ackroyd had a buying order in Cons Gold shares, and over the winter the share price had risen as there had been constant press reports that the company was a possible takeover victim. There had, however, been such rumours as long ago as 1977 and in the winter of 1979/80 all gold mining shares were rising as the price of gold soared. However, it was clear to the directors of Cons Gold that something was going on: by the middle of January more than nine million shares had been transferred but the new owners had not registered. The chairman of Cons Gold, Lord Errol, had asked the Stock Exchange Council to investigate this build-up of unregistered shares as long ago as November, but had been told that there were no grounds for doing so.

On 6 February the company told its shareholders about the build-up of unregistered transfers. On 8 February the managing director of Cons Gold met Mr Daniel LeRoy-Lewis, the chairman of Ackroyds, to learn that all transactions between jobbers and brokers were confidential and therefore he could be told nothing. And on the afternoon of Monday 11 February Cons Gold announced that it had asked the Department of Trade to investigate the membership of the company (that is, the ownership of its shares).

The Department reported this week that some of De Beers' shares were acquired illegally (if accidentally): the company seems certain to be prosecuted.

This publicity was obviously very damaging for Davis, Borkum, Hare and their anonymous clients. Late on Friday 8 February Rowe & Pitman withdrew the buying order for Cons Gold shares. The order had already enabled the Anglo American/De Beers group to buy, since October, more than 21,000,000 shares in Cons Gold. This represented some 14 per cent of the Cons Gold share capital but was some way short of the 25 per cent target. On the Saturday morning, Mr Wilmot-Sitwell told De Beers that they would have to launch what is now known as a dawn raid on Cons Gold if they were to go on increasing their holding. Rowe & Pitman had carried out such an operation in 1979 on behalf of an American company that wanted to buy a fifth of the insurance broker Stenhouse Holdings. The technique is simple: by suddenly offering a price considerably in excess of the market price the brokers hope to entice a large number of shareholders into selling. The advantage of buying a large shareholding in this way is that it takes the victim company by surprise and minimises the chance of it taking avoiding action.

Rowe & Pitman had made this suggestion unsucessfully to De Beers several times during the winter. On this occasion, Mr Wilmot-Sitwell suggested that De Beers advertise their plans in the press over the weekend, to ensure that as many shareholders as possible had the opportunity to sell. Again, however, his advice was not taken. Not until the Department of Trade investigation was announced on Monday afternoon did the board of De Beers change its mind and Mr Wilmot-Sitwell call the early meeting in his office with the jobbers on Tuesday 12 February.

AT THAT MEETING the jobbers were told of De Beers' wish to increase their holding to 25 per cent by buying a further 11 per cent that morning. There would be no bid for the company but 'in the fullness of time' De Beers might increase its holding to 29 per cent. (Under the City's Takeover code a bid would be compulsory if De Beers bought a holding of more than 30 per cent). It was agreed that Rowe & Pitman would ring their clients — pension funds, insurance companies and banks — and offer them 615½p per Cons Gold share. On the previous day, the price had been around 525p.

From this meeting, Messrs Wilmot-Sitwell, Raven and Cook adjourned to Rowe & Pitman's dealing room, close to the dealing floor of the Stock exchange. There they briefed the other jobbers who dealt in Cons Gold shares and it was agreed that when the Stock Exchange opened at 9.30 a.m. they would all be willing to buy Cons Gold shares at 615p.

Between them Rowe & Pitman and the jobbers had little difficulty in buying the 16½ million shares they wanted. Thirty people in

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Rowe & Pitman's office were put to work ringing more than 190 financial institutions, just over half of whom agreed to sell some shares (in total 13½ million). The remaining 3 million came from the jobbers.

The jobbers, however, bought less than 1,800,000 shares in the market. They made up the rest of their holding by selling Rowe & Pitman shares which they *did not own.* This practice — known as 'selling short' — is perfectly legitimate and an accepted part of stock exchange business. The short-seller hopes that the price of the shares will fall soon afterwards so that he can buy later at a lower price and thus make a profit. In this case the jobbers had every reason to believe that the price would fall as soon as the De Beers buying order was completed and an announcement made about what had happened; months of rumour and speculation would be brought to an end. And, predictably enough, when the buying order came to an end the price dropped to 525p, rising later in the day to 570p and closing at 510p. This means that, at the very least the jobbers made a profit of more than £500,000; it may well have been more than £1 million. It seems hardly worth mentioning that, in line with Stock Exchange practice, they also received ½p a share (a total of £67,500) for the shares which Rowe & Pitman found itself, without going through the market.

The Stock Exchange, where companies are snapped up at breakfast

LAST MONTH the Stock Exchange produced its report on the Consolidated Goldfields affair. Oddly enough, very little of the report's details of how De Beers built up its stake, how the dawn raid was launched, or who profited from it, was published in the press. The Stock Exchange's conclusions were generally extremely muted, but they commented on the jobbers' short-sale as follows:

> These shares amounted to about a third of the total shares which Rowe & Pitman obtained through the market. We do not contest the right of jobbers to sell short, neither can we prevent clients from selling short in open market operations. Short selling is an essential means by which a free market in securities is maintained. But in circumstances such as these, when a single buyer has declared to the market his intention of buying a limited amount of stock at a much higher price, total freedom to sell short is potentially inequitable. We believe the Council should regulate this aspect in future.

The proposed regulation amounts to allowing short sales but suggesting that the Council of the Stock Exchange 'be prepared to use its powers' to cancel short sales. This suggestion itself is but one in a list of ten similar ones in a Code of Practice which the inquiry suggested as a way of regulating dawn raids. it concluded its report with these words:

> There is no better regulator than the market. The fluid and continuous market existing in the Stock Exchange allows the possibility of transactions in securities which might be impossible under more restricted conditions.

There are many people who do not view what is going on in the Stock market with such equanimity. They include trade secretary John Nott and the directors of many British companies. Last month alone there were five dawn raids. The reason for concern is the ease with which effective control of a company can change hands. Our own inquiry into one dawn raid — that of Rockwell International on Serck, just before the Cons Gold raid — has revealed that already that company's trading prospects are being damaged by the existence of a large shareholder.

THERE ARE SEVERAL factors which explain both the incidence and ease of execution of dawn raids. First, motive. Several of the dawn raids have been the first move in a bid to take over the raided company and in others the holding is likely to be used as the platform for a bid in the future. Many British companies are extremely attractive takeover propositions at the moment because they are valued so cheaply by the stock market. For example, on 18 July stockbrokers Grieveson Grant, acting for the publisher Robert Maxwell, bought 29.9 per cent of the shares in BPC — publishers and printers — from 50 shareholders in a period of ten minutes. For less than £3 million Mr Maxwell secured just short of what the Takeover Code defines as effective control of a company with total assets of £70 million — a figure which excludes the value of the goodwill attached to such publishing names as Futura, Macdonalds and Purnells. The reasons, of course, is that BPC is currently losing money. Another example is Carpets International, Europe's largest carpet company. In May, Hong Kong Carpet Manufacturing was able to buy a quarter of this company for £1.9 million. True, the carpet industry, like much of the textile trade is in a bad way at the moment, but CI's last balance sheet showed assets of almost £40 million.

Most of the raids have so far been restricted to companies with poor prospects in the immediate future — Cons Gold is one of the obvious exceptions. But, as that operation showed, it is possible to pick up large shareholdings in big, financially secure companies as well. This — taken with the fact that many British concerns are facing a profit collapse at present — means that a very wide range of companies is vulnerable to dawn raiding.

Who, then, are the shareholders willing to sell, and why do they do so? In recent years there has been a rapid growth in the proportion of shares held by institutional investors: pension funds, insurance companies and, less importantly, investment and unit trusts. These institutions now own over half the shares in quoted companies. According to work done for the Wilson Committee* there are, on a rough estimate, only 2,400 institutions owning assets worth a total of £88 billion. The concentration of control is even greater than this because of the existence of a few large institutions and because many small funds are managed by merchant banks who specialise in that kind of business.

Such developments make it much easier to launch a dawn raid, as so few people need to be contacted in the limited amount of time available. In addition, these shareholders are often willing sellers: the concentration of share ownership has made it much harder to sell large holdings of shares because the stock market is no longer a selection of many small buyers and sellers, with many differing views about future prospects, but is a small number of investors with remarkably similar views about the state of the economy and capitalism. Such a uniformity of view is only reinforced by the many cross-directorships and such like, which abound among financial institutions.

NONETHELESS, IT CLEARLY comes as a surprise to many that these institutions are so willing to sell at a moment's notice. Recently some considerable effort has been put into promoting the idea that institutional investors are long term holders of shares. The Wilson Committee commented:

> There is an impressive degree of unanimity in the evidence we have received about the desirability of the institutions taking an active interest in the performance of the companies whose shares they hold . . . An essential accompaniment to greater involvement is clearly that institutional shareholders should be prepared to take the long view (p.251).

However, elsewhere Wilson's evidence suggests that the contrary is happening:

> Investing institutions have over the years since 1963 become more active traders of ordinary shares (p.551).

The report goes on to point out that, on

**Committee to Review the Functioning of Financial Institutions,* Cmnd 7937, 1980

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average, in 1973-77 a pension fund held a share for six years, compared with 24 years in the sixties.

This concern with the short-term — whatever the propaganda may say — is well illustrated in the case of Serck, the valve company. On 1 February this year, brokers Cazenove launched a dawn raid on behalf of Rockwell International, capturing 29.7 per cent of the shares at 75p, compared with an earlier price of around 40p. This was followed by a bid for the company which the Serck directors supported only reluctantly: they believed that it was not in the best interests of the company industrially, but recognised that the price was most attractive, in view of the recently announced bad results and poor prospects.

We have spoken to three of the institutions who sold that morning — Avon Insurance, Save and Prosper unit trust group and the Abbey National Building Society pension fund. Avon Insurance told us that they did not talk about individual share deals, but when pressed their chief executive, Mr Charles Thomas, said that 'investment is buying and selling in the market place and the job of the investment manager is to sell at the best possible time'. Save and Prosper gave a similar reply, saying that the price 'discounted a fair amount of recovery', which is certainly true, but even at 75p Rockwell were paying well below the current cost of Serck's factories.

The experience of the Abbey National pension fund is instructive in other respects. Their investment manager, Mr Keith McKay, explained that he had been telephoned by a broker — not Cazenove — to be told the price was 75p. Normally he would not have sold — he has not sold in any other dawn raid — but on this occasion the broker told him that he had visited the company recently and expressed serious doubts about its viability if there was not a takeover. This is, of course, a most damaging thing to say of a company but can be said with safety in confidence to a client. It was a curious remark to make: the chief executive of Serck, Mr Michael Pinckard, had not spoken to any stockbroker for almost two months.

In the event, the Rockwell bid was dropped — and Serck is still in business. But the shareholding is causing problems. The company is currently trying to negotiate several joint ventures around the world with suitable local companies. Some of these potential partners have expressed the view that Rockwell's large shareholding in Serck is an obstacle to agreement. At just below the 30 per cent level, the shareholding amounts to effective control of the company and the potential partners — some of whom are Rockwell's competitors — are concerned about what that might mean for the future of Serck as an independent company.

In its report on the Cons Gold affair the Stock Exchange said that the rapid adjustment of share prices showed how the market was 'highly efficient in this technical sense.' It is not, however, transparently obvious that this is an efficient way of deciding the control and use of economic resources. At the moment such decisions, for major industries, can literally be made in a matter of minutes by a small number of people in the City of London.

AFGHANISTAN
Anthony Hyman

Afghan opposition looks for unity while Russian soldiers pilfer raisins

Invaders with a sweet tooth

'THE RUSSIANS are the only strong force in Afghan politics. We should learn from them at least the principle of unity,' comments an embittered exile in Peshawar, the Pakistani town which provides a base for many of the Afghan opposition parties. Certainly, although the government of Babrak Karmal looks dilapidated, and is unable to prevent members of the Afghan Communist Party's two factions — Khalq and Parcham — from gunning one another down in Kabul, the opposition has not seemed able to do any better. In the past month private warfare between five opposition parties has resulted in 12 dead and 30 wounded in one province alone, Ningrahar, where guerrillas have struggled for more than a year to gain control of the provincial capital, Jalalabad. Afghan nationalists unattached to the main opposition parties have come to believe that the leaders are less concerned with beating the Russians than with ensuring their own future as politicians-in-exile.

The fortunes of the resistance groups could revive if large arms deliveries believed to have been made recently from Egypt and friendly Muslim countries in the Gulf are properly distributed around the rival parties and are also, for the first time, given to poorly-armed regional and tribal groupings. The arms consignments apparently include many anti-tank guns, which are urgently needed to lessen the immense disparity in military equipment between guerrillas and Soviet troops.

About a million refugees are now encamped just inside Pakistan and Iran and, in spite of international assistance, their presence is a great strain to the host countries. Equally serious, but more neglected, is the recent growth in the number of internal refugees. Hundreds of thousands of uprooted villagers have found shelter in the towns, which are relative havens of security from bombing raids and from hunger. This development is particularly evident in Kabul — the only large city in the country — where the population has risen from 700,000 in 1979 to an estimated one and a half million now. The Hazara parts of Kabul are bursting at the seams with refugees from Hazarat villages to the west of the city, while repeated bombings of dissident regions such as Logar and Wardak have produced a stream of Pukhtoon tribesmen fleeing their ruined villages.

Although the authorities in Kabul are trying to stop this influx — they have hastily erected roadblocks around the capital — the city still grows bigger by the day, as if by relentless force of nature. Only traditional Afghan customs of family hospitality keep many of the internal refugees with food and a roof over their heads. The refugees have no hope of employment in the city.

THE SCALE of this migration has led to a collapse of the rural economy. Villagers and herdsmen have ceased to produce food not only for themselves but also for Kabul, where there are now only irregular arrivals of lorries carrying vegetables or fruits, which sell out immediately. The mass slaughter of cattle in the Northern provinces has caused a desperate shortage of milk and meat.

The shortfall in grain production, like last year's, will have to be made up largely by the Soviet Union. Wheat is the national staple food, and in the towns supplies have been maintained and prices have been held to 3 Afghanis (about 2p) for each standard flat loaf of bread (*nan*). No Afghan administration would dare risk bread riots in the capital, but only Kabul and the towns where the Soviet-backed administration has effective control can expect imports of wheat or other essential foodstuffs. Food shortages, and near-famine in poverty-stricken Jazarajat, are of great value to the Russians in bringing to heel rural communities which are supporting the resistance.

Because of this policy of 'starving them out', and because of general shortages caused by muddled land reforms, the coming winter will be a hard one for the guerrilla groups high in the mountains. But the resistance can take some heart from the decline in the morale of the Afghan Army and Air Force. Afghan pilots have been withdrawn from bombing raids, and eighty pilots were sent to the Soviet Union in June on an oddly-timed 'three year training scheme', after their loyalty had become suspect. The love for the Russians felt by the dwindling Afghan Army must also be in serious doubt after reports that an armoured division defected *en masse* in the crucial southern zone near Ghazni.

Soviet troops in Kabul are exhibiting a slight decline in military discipline, natural enough in the superficially rich atmosphere of Kabul. Exotic imported articles are stacked high in the city's shop windows and, lacking cash with which to buy them, many Soviet soldiers are engaging in barter. The going rate for one packet of American or English cigarettes in Kabul is two bullets (which is less than half the price in the provinces). Not only bullets but also items of uniform, wrenches, screwdrivers and tools of all kinds from Soviet vehicles, together with petrol from armoured cars, are finding their way into the Kabul bazaars. Soviet soldiers are interested in jeans, cigarettes and other western imports as well as in one of Afghanistan's own products — drugs. Hashish and opium are freely available (as always) in Kabul, and trade is brisk.

The city's grocery business is less successful, as many food shops are suffering from pilfering during the curfew hours after 11pm Although they are, in theory, protected from burglary by the presence of Soviet and Afghan patrols through the city, grocery stores are suffering from the attentions of Sovie soldiers with a voracious sweet tooth: how else can one explain the fact that packets o biscuits and chocolate are continually removed while money lying in the shops is lef untouched? At check-points and road-block across the northern trunk road whicl eventually joins the Soviet border across th Oxus, similar acts of sweet tooth robber frequently occur. Trucks laden with lusciou raisins and other Afghan fruits are stoppe for inspection by Soviet soldiers, who take crateful for their own consumption befor allowing the lorries to continue their journey

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SOVIET UNION
Bohdan P. Nahaylo

Contradictory statements about whether Islamic believers are 'quacks'

How the USSR 'cares for' Muslims

OVER THE PAST few months, Soviet authorities have been working hard to repair the damage caused to the Soviet Union's image in Islamic eyes by the invasion of Afghanistan. As long ago as 16 January, an official spokesman writing in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* was dismissing as Western propaganda 'the idea that the Soviet Communists are sworn enemies of religion' and was praising Islam for its links with anti-imperialist struggle. This line has been reiterated in numerous articles in the Soviet press. *Pravda,* for example, carried an article on 14 April (reprinted the following day in the newspapers of the Soviet Central Asian republics) entitled 'Islam and the Political Struggle', which said:

> Showing respect for the religious feelings of the masses, the USSR holds out the hand of solidarity and friendship to all Muslims who are struggling against imperialist forces and exploitation for the right to control their own destiny, for freedom, independence and economic and social progress.

Seeking to reassure Muslim countries that they have no reason to fear the Soviet Union, the Soviet media have spared no efforts to present as rosy a picture as possible of the situation among the USSR's 45 million or so Muslims. The existence of any 'Muslim problem' or of an approaching 'Islamic explosion' are strongly denied. 'We have no problems whatsoever in this respect', *Literaturnaya Gazeta* asserted characteristically. 'In our country everyone who professes faith in Islam has every opportunity to observe its precepts, something that even the most barefaced opponents of the Soviet system admit'. Official Soviet Muslim leaders like Mufti Zia ud-Din Babakhanov, Chairman of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, have been interviewed about religious freedom in the USSR. Soviet radio broadcasts have devoted considerable attention to the repair and restoration of mosques and Muslim monuments.

The campaign has apparently been meeting with some success. In early July a 'Muslims in the USSR' exhibition opened in Jordan. A Tass dispatch from Amman on 8 July quoted the Rector of the University of Jordan as saying that the exhibition showed Muslims in the USSR not only enjoyed complete freedom of worship but also received great care and attention from the Soviet state.

While the Soviet authorities foster this picture abroad, the reality at home remains quite different. Several recent official statements, intended strictly for internal consumption, reveal an official attitude towards Soviet Muslims that is clearly at odds with the one presented to Muslims outside the USSR.

On 20 December 1979 *Pravda Vostoka,* the organ of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the major Russian-language newspaper in Soviet Central Asia, strongly attacked the 'reactionary role of Islam in the life, conduct and awareness of the Soviet people'. In a major article, entitled 'Social Progress and Atheism: Light against Darkness', a Professor I. Dzhabarov reminded readers that the authorities were working to bring about the population's 'final liberation from the shackles of religion'. He warned, however, that it is not enough to assume that religion will disappear naturally in the conditions of Soviet society. 'Systematic atheistic work' should be conducted even 'among that part of the population which has an apathetic, indifferent or at times conciliatory attitude to religion' and which frequently identifies the national with the religious and fails to see 'the social and ideological harm that religious survivals cause'. Dzhabarov singled out for special criticism 'a certain part of the intelligentsia' who adopt an ambivalent attitude towards religion. Furthermore, he urged that the Muslim clergy's promotion of the identity between communist morals and the morals of Islam be rejected as there could be no coexistence in the ideological sphere.

More recently still, an important speech was delivered on 13 June by M. Gapurov, the First Party Secretary of the Turhmen SSR, to a republican conference in Ashkhabad. Entitled 'Raising the standard of the working people's patriotic and internationalist education', it dealt with the problems of combatting religion and nationalism in the Soviet Central Asian republic, which borders on Iran and Afghanistan. 'It is true . . . that everything is not running smoothly', Gapurov admitted. 'We have many difficulties . . .'

'Religious beliefs', he continued, 'have played and are playing an inhuman, reactionary role in disuniting people and setting them against one another'.

> Muslim quack-confessors, champions of old, reactionary principles and rites, operating wilfully in the so-called holy places, are trying to kindle religious fanaticism, fuel feelings of national narrow-mindedness and instil in family relations harmful feudal and kinship survivals and rituals.

WHAT evidently causes the Soviet authorities particular concern is the existence of an underground Islam in the USSR. In contrast to official Soviet Islam, with its estimated 2,000 registered clerics and 200 or so functioning mosques whose leaders accept restrictions imposed by the state, there is a 'parallel' unofficial and clandestine Islam represented mainly by the Sufi brotherhoods. Reportedly well-organised, active and uncompromisingly hostile to the Soviet regime, it has survived over 50 years of sustained efforts to destroy it.

These considerations undoubtedly prompted Gapurov to call for more effective atheist efforts:

> We must learn purposefully to combine internationalist and atheist education in order to rob nationalism of its religious cover and religion of its claim to represent the nation.

From this and other recent statements, it becomes clear that the 'introduction of new elements' in Soviet Central Asia refers not only to 'atheist education' but also to an increase in the already considerable efforts to promote knowledge of the Russian language and culture among non-Russians.

In recent months the Soviet press has carried attacks on Muslim practices ranging from 'regular worship in home mosques' in Chechen-Ingushia to traditional wedding customs in Tadzikistan and Turkmenistan. In their place, the Soviet authorities are attempting to introduce what Gapurov calls 'new civil customs, ceremonies and rituals' designed to reflect the 'Soviet way of life'.

So far, with the exceptions of the Crimean Tartars and Meskhetians, dissatisfaction among Soviet Muslims with official policies has not been articulated through active political dissent. Nevertheless, considering the rapid population growth among the Soviet Central Asian peoples, and their growing national self-assertiveness, it is not surprising that the Soviet leadership seems to regard them as a greater problem in the long run than the other non-Russian nationalities. Muslims in the USSR are indeed receiving 'great care and attention' from the state, though evidently in a different spirit from that which the Jordanian rector and others are being led to believe.

Peter Emery, MP

IN AN article in the New Statesman of 11 July 1980 we suggested that Mr Peter Emery's company could receive £250,000 from public funds from the closure of the Underwater Training Centre at Loche Linnhe near Fort William. We are happy to make clear that this is not the case.

Our article intended to raise the question of potential conflicts of interest where ex-public servants accept positions in industry and commerce both generally and in this specific instance. We did not, however, intend to convey the impression that Mr Emery had used his influence as an ex-Minister to gain the management contract of the Underwater Training Centre which he negotiated for a company of which he was a salaried Director.

We apologise to Mr Emery for any harm that may have been done to him or to his company Shenley Trust Services Limited by the publication of this article.

Mr Kenneth Cooke OBE
Mr Peter Badge
Mr Edmond MacDermott

IN OUR ISSUE of 19 October we published in 'Notes' an article from a contributor entitled 'Behind Southall's Justice' which reported on recent proceedings in the Barnet Magistrates' Court following the Southall anti-National Front demonstration in April 1979, and in which it was stated that the salaries of the above-mentioned London Stipendiary Magistrates were paid by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police. This statement raised soem doubt about the impartiality of Stipendiary Magistrates. We have since ascertained that the statement was incorrect. We are pleased to correct it and to withdraw and apologize for the suggestion of partiality.

The article should not have contained any reference whatsoever to Mr Kenneth Cooke, who was not sitting at Barnet at the relevant time. It follows that the 'conviction rate' attributed to Mr Cooke and other remarks made about him in the article did not apply to him.

The article attributed to Mr Badge 'a conviction rate' which was overstated. In addition we wish to make it clear that Mr Badge worked for many years in private practice as a solicitor during which time he defended a substantial number of clients in criminal proceedings.

We are glad to take this opportunity of correcting these errors and of expressing our regret for any distress or embarrassment caused by our original report.

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London Diary

☐A few weeks ago I received the pre-publication issue of *South*, a monthly magazine which promised 'Facts, Analysis and Argument' concerning the 'Third World'. On closer inspection I discovered that though the publisher is listed as South Publications Ltd, the magazine is yet another glossy product of the Third World Foundation enterprises. For those not in the know this august body was set up with the substantial financial backing of the world's 'fastest-growing bank': Bank of Credit and Commerce International. The opening sentence of the editorial is couched in the mystificatory prose which is the hallmark of the Foundation's boss, Altaf Gauhar:

> SOUTH is cast in the perspective of change — change not as an event but as a global process of irresistible compulsions.

When I ring up the Managing Editor Khalid Hasan the following morning to obtain the code necessary to decipher this gibberish, I am told that he is not available because he no longer works there. I wonder whether the 'global process of irresistible compulsions' has claimed another victim. I then discover that the first dummy issue had been produced in December 1979 and the Features Editor Ann Zammit had been sacked soon afterwards. Perhaps this is what was meant by the magazine being 'cast in the perspective of change'. Zammit fought the sacking and the case is currently in the hands of the NUJ solicitors. Khalid Hasan resigned gracefully and is remaining silent for the moment. Some speculation is therefore in order. Foundation-watchers have told me that Hasan's crime was appearing on BBC's *Panorama* programme and confirming that Pakistani scientists were working on a nuclear bomb. Hasan was the Press Secretary of the late Bhutto and thus in the know. His appearance was beamed back to Pakistan via the Embassy and a despatch from the London correspondent of the English language daily *Dawn*. The Third World Foundation has a strict policy of not criticising *any* aspect of the policy of a number of third world regimes, especially the Muslim states. Hasan breached the house rules and was asked to resign from the Club. He went further and wrote a factual article in the pre-publication issue which explained the predominance of dictatorships in the third world. As a result the magazine is not being sent to potential subscribers (Generals Zia and Ziaur) in Pakistan and Bangladesh. One wonders whether there will be yet another dummy issue before the final product hits the stands.

☐The Editor-in-Chief of *South* is Altaf Gauhar. The Managing Director is his son, Humayun Gauhar. Gauhar senior is also Editor-in-Chief of the *Third World Quarterly* and the *Third World Review*, which is produced weekly in conjunction with the *Guardian*. Apart from his inimitable prose style, Gauhar's speciality is conducting interviews with heads of state and governments. These are conducted with a tact and understanding that reflects the approach of a PR person rather than an investigative journalist or political analyst. Gauhar's basic training is that of a civil servant. His most influential period in Pakistani politics was when he was the Information Secretary under the military dictatorship of Field-Marshal Ayub Khan in the Sixties. His job then was to ensure that the Pakistani press remained suitably servile. His failure to publish even a single article critical of the present military ruler indicates that his penchant for uniformed heads of state remains as strong as ever. The Third World Foundation is conceived as an unofficial advisory service for third world governments. Cynics say that the cover of the pre-publication issue which is headlined 'Zimbabwe points the way' is in reality a reference to the Foundation: one of its ambitions is reportedly to help the new government launch its own newspaper. Altaf Gauhar certainly possesses the requisite skills to carry through such an operation.

☐The burghers of Hampstead are extremely upset at the thought of McDonald's opening a branch in the High Street. The local paper has been deluged with correspondence on the subject and 3,000 worthy citizens have signed a petition objecting to the presence of the 'Big Mac'. An angry council tenant has responded by suggesting that the 3,000 form a co-op and buy the disused Woolworth's themselves. As for the argument that it would increase the litter in the area, the same tenant has asked a pertinent question: 'I wonder how many who are against Big Mac have big or small dogs who litter the pathways and the Heath?' I have a simple suggestion for the 3,000 objectors. They should wage an unremitting campaign against all multinationals and combine it with a spirited defence of the closed shop. McDonald's would then be forced to run a million miles and add a few more branches in downtown Peking and Shanghai where they have recently received a franchise to sell the 'Big Mac'.

☐In May 1977 fifteen national and provincial newspapers carried a 'sensational' story about Tom Litterick, who was then a very left-wing Labour MP for Selly Oak. The story alleged that Litterick was failing to provide for his family after having separated from his wife. Litterick decided to sue all the papers for libel as the story was an outright fabrication. The fifteen newspapers formed what can only be termed an ad hoc trade union to try and defeat Litterick. The papers concerned were such defenders of the closed shop as the *Daily Mail, Daily Express, Birmingham Post, Manchester Evening News, Western Mail, South Wales Echo, Belfast Telegraph, Coventry Telegraph* etc. Over three years later and after Litterick refused to budge, he received a letter from the legal firm of Oswald Hickson, Collier & Co., which stated: 'Our Clients accept there was no truth in the allegation . . . apologise to you', etc. The same letter was sent on different dates in fourteen separate envelopes. The *Belfast Telegraph* is still fighting the good fight. Litterick was awarded £15,000 in damages and costs amounted to approximately £50,000. Not an uninteresting little case one might have thought. Worthy of a few paragraphs at least. Except for the *Coventry Telegraph*, not one of the newspapers involved published any acknowledgment of the settlement. Tom Litterick will nonetheless be enjoying his holiday this year.

☐David Boulton, promoter of investigative journalism in Granada and scourge of the D-notice system, was not ever thus. Seventeen years ago, in 1963, he was the editor of the CND's monthly newspaper *Sanity*. For that year's Aldermaston March, *Sanity* had a real scoop. A small group called 'Spies For Peace' (ancestors of our own Duncan Campbell) had discovered the existence of a whole series of 'regional seats of government' (RSGs) — underground shelters up and down the country to which top people would repair during a nuclear strike. One of them at Warren Row, outside Reading, was just off the route of the march. The newspapers refused to publish anything, warned off by a D-notice. But intrepid young David put it on the back page of *Sanity*. Then there was a last-minute panic. Would he have to go to prison? Alas for investigative journalism. The decision was taken to tear off the back page before distribution. It was a very humiliated Boulton who observed a bulk of the Easter march peeling off the scheduled route to visit Warren Row. He did publish the 'Spies' document in a subsequent issue of *Sanity*, but by then it was too late to have any impact whatsoever. Laurie Flynn and other researchers on 'World in Action' should take note.

☐Full marks to Denis Skinner for denouncing the latest display of geriatric symbolism to which we are being treated in order to celebrate a certain 80th birthday. The left has either underestimated or ignored the important ideological role which the monarchy plays in late-capitalist Britain. In Scandinavia and Holland the monarchy simply reflects a preference for a hereditary head of state. In Britain, as even the *Economist* confessed during the grotesque occurrences of Jubilee Week in 1977, the monarchy has been the 'greatest impediment to change'. After the Jubilee and the 80th birthday we can eagerly await the celebration of the Prince of Wales' nuptials. By that time unemployment in the principality itself will have risen to over 30 per cent of the working population. Nor should we forget the ominous popularity of the Prince Consort among the officers in the British army. During the miners' strike of 1974 there was much talk in the messes of a PFP ('Philip for President') campaign. Field Marshal Carver is said to have reprimanded those guilty of 'loose talk', but it remains an instructive episode. Wanted in the labour movement: an intransigent republicanism.

Tariq Ali

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐The IBA is understood to be investigating the theoretical and practical difficulties of enabling viewers to take part in a service of Holy Communion by television. It has been suggested that viewers should be invited to place bread and wine near the television set in their own homes while a communion service is being broadcast, and to eat the bread and drink the wine at the appropriate moment in the service. — *The Times* (Peter Garlake)

☐In what is regarded as an enlightened and possibly pioneering survey, the parents are invited to say in which circumstances their children should receive corporal punishment. 'This could be caning or smacking,' the chief education officer, Mr William Wright, said yesterday. 'I would not want it to be thought that we are talking about beatings.' — *Guardian* (Dieter Pevsner)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alternatives to doomsday?

From Robin Bowles
In reply to William Rodgers's article (NS 18 July) and his contention that Americans may campaign against nuclear weapons, he may be interested to know of the plight of Jim Douglas, a theologian, and two others imprisoned by the US government following civil disobedience action at the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington. Those convicted were not allowed to give evidence about the issues of first-strike weapons, international crimes on the part of the US government and the religious and moral convictions they themselves held.
26 Peveril Road, Old Duston, Northampton

From Shaun O'Hara
The issue of whether to have the latest nuclear weaponry must be the ultimate campaign for civil liberties. For with it goes the liberty of deciding how and when an individual is to die. What concerns me is that I, like the rest of the country, have absolutely no say in whether or not we should advance the nucelar arms race. Some may argue that in participating in the last general election I had my share of democracy. Well, thank you, you proud owners of nuclear fall-out shelters.

Which takes me back to William Rodgers. He says, 'An American can protest against nuclear weapons . . . but no Soviet citizen can'. All that I can, in fact, do is to campaign against the decision made, but the degree of democracy that I have in this matter is on the same scale as that of citizens of Russia.
276 Great Cheetham Street, Salford

From Stanley Price
In his article William Rodgers states that no-one seriously believes that British nuclear disarmament would, in itself, arrest the spread of nuclear weapons. But many believe that a refusal by Britain to deploy cruise missiles in Britain would carry some weight with both super-powers in the direction of reducing their nuclear armaments, or at least curbing their plans for nuclear arms development.
UN Association, Newton-on-Ouse, York

From Dorothy Galton
I feel very much in agreement with Robin Cook's argument (NS 25 July) but, from the point of view of defence, it seems to me that the Soviet Union should be regarded not as a European but as a Eurasian power, and this makes the European aspect of the problem rather less daunting. It means there should be a nuclear-free zone right along the Soviet borders, and makes the struggle for it a truly international one.
3 Hooks Hill Road, Sheringham, Norfolk

From E.J. Griffith
The letter of Edward James (NS 25 July) deserves some comment because he is so nearly right in his diagnosis of East/West relations; but not quite — he falls into a common error. 'There is an utter lack of trust,' he says, 'between the two sides . . .' But it is plain to me that the lack of trust is only on the Soviet side — and not only for the very good reasons that Mr James gives. The lack of trust on our side is invented for propaganda purposes as an excuse to maintain our arms industry without which our economy would — perhaps even will — collapse.
1a Park Road, Nailsworth, Glos

Is they consistent?

From P.A. Marsh
Why can't your writers make up their minds whether organisations such as British Rail, the Post Office and the Ministry of Defence are singular or plural? In four articles in your issue of 18 July your writers refer to an organisation as though it is both singular and plural. It really is deplorable that you can't hit upon a house style — even within the same article.
10a Havelock Road, London SW19

Anglophobic expertise

From Simon Watney
I feel I must reply to John Spurling's surly review of my *English Post-Impressionism* (NS 25 July). Given his track record of strong attacks on several of the painters whose work I consider, his opinions are entirely predictable. His initial claim, however, that I have attempted to set up the Bloomsbury and Camden Town Group artists as some kind of 'lost' avant garde wilfully ignores my explicit statement to the contrary. I was highly critical of precisely that tendency to regard art in terms of some monolithic theory of artistic 'progress' which inevitably relegates English art — or Hungarian or Danish for that matter — to the dismal status of 'alternative traditions'. Their crime, as Mr Spurling generously explains in his use of such phrases as 'provincial ambitions' and 'borrowed notions', is quite simply that of not being French.

It is highly misleading of him to suggest that Roger Fry is the 'villain' of my book, since at no point do I question Fry's many and invaluable achievements in his championing of the arts in Britain. But neither do I overlook the fact that his early beliefs were firmly located within a highly elitist theory of culture. I suspect that Mr Spurling's fury has been aroused by my historical and theoretical analysis of that Anglophobia which is so characteristic of mainstream art history, a tradition largely initiated by Roger Fry and of which Mr Spurling is a consistently able exponent. At the same time I find it strange that the NS should have given for review a book which is at least an attempt to make a socialist analysis of early 20th-century English art and aesthetics to a man whose intellectual hero believed, at any rate through the period I was discussing, that the ability to appreciate art is entirely dependent upon some innate aesthetic capacity.
Top Flat, 6 Belsize Park, London NW 3

Roger Woddis
The minister

'The material is ready now should war threaten for an intensive publicity campaign on TV, radio and in the press informing people what they could do quickly.' — Mr William Whitelaw

'We're geared up and ready,'
The Minister said,
With the confident smile
Of the slightly insane.
'And the minute we know
You will shortly be dead,
We'll be all set to go
With a thumping campaign.'

'If you whitelaw your windows
And hide in a sack,
Your demise will be mild
And your injuries slight.
As your underground boss,
I'll be safe from attack,
So we've got our priorities
Just about right.'

He assured us there'd be
Fewer Russians alive,
And we said to each other,
'That seems to make sense;
He's a harmless old sod,
And we're sure to survive,'
As we laid in brown paper
And set up our tents.

. . . . . .

But he did for us all
With his civil defence.

Staying alive

From Peter Galpin
Mark Kidel comments (NS 25 July) that the Rolling Stones ooze 'a sense of stagnation' in contrast to the growth in style and confidence of bluesmen like Muddy Waters and B.B. King. This, however, is not solely a function of commercial success as he argues. B.B. King and Muddy Waters are also commercial successes, but what they show is a pattern of development and a continuing commitment to live performance. Muddy Waters, a pioneer of the transition from rural to city blues, plays at jazz festivals. B.B. King, who supported the Stones on tour in 1968, has never stopped playing to live audiences, including recent tours of the Soviet Union and of American prisons. He has shown that an artist can develop not only his style but also his stature through commitment to performance after commercial success.
11 Wesley Road, Armley, Leeds 12

Suitable saviour?

From Philip Kleinman
For a clever man, Stuart Holland is adept at missing a point. My letter (NS 4 July) complained that in his article (NS 20 June) he had described as a democrat a man, Ahmed Ben Bella, who came to power by a military *putsch* and thereafter locked up his political opponents. In his reply (NS 25 July) he made several perfectly true but perfectly irrelevant statements about the suffering of the Algerian people but he did not even attempt to answer my main question, to wit what was ever democratic about Ben Bella?

This is an important question, not because most NS readers care very much for the ins and outs of North African history, but because they ought to care what someone of Stuart Holland's standing in British left-wing politics means by the word democracy. Is it only in Third World countries that it is democratic to grab power by the gun and persecute one's erstwhile comrades or could a good democrat do the same thing in Europe? Whatever Stuart Holland's answer I would like to know his reasoning.
18 Tremlett Grove, London N19

In praise of the king of Thailand

From Dr Leo Aylen
I am touched and honoured by the way in which the press has continued to remind the British public about the film *Soul of a Nation* (see Chris Mullin, NS 11 July). It was easy to assume that because I praised this one particular king of Thailand, I am a right-wing bigot. Easy. But totally untrue. I praise the king of Thailand because he works very hard to provide food for the hungry and medical care for the sick. I grew up in the Third World and since then I have always regarded feeding the hungry as more valuable than talking politics.

Another point that has been implied in the controversy is that I am in disagreement with David Lomax, whom I have never met. On the contrary. David Lomax approached the king of Thailand as an investigative journalist. I approached as a poet. Yes, Thailand has had a military dictatorship for much of King Bhumibol's reign. It appears to be moving towards full parliamentary democracy, but has not reached there yet. All of this was discussed at some length in the film. But neither David Lomax nor I were principally writing about the parliamentary system. We were writing about a man who inherited a role, and we both came to the conclusion — if I may so interpret David Lomax's article in the *Sunday Telegraph* magazine of 9 February 1980 — that King Bhumibol has turned his performance of his role into a fine humanitarian achievement.
71 Chelsham Road, London SW 4

Information wanted

Mythical stories: current in English lore, heard by everyone and believed by at least some.
Michael Gillespie, 14 Stratford Villas, London SW14

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Paul Preston

The Tactics of Amnesia

The Spanish Revolution: The Left and the Struggle for Power during the Civil War by BURNETT BOLLOTEN *University of North Carolina* £16.45

Communism in Spain in the Franco Era: The Autobiography of Federico Sánchez by JORGE SEMPRUN *Harvester* £14.50

The Communist Party of Spain is currently celebrating its sixtieth anniversary. The meetings and the exhibitions being mounted commemorate an embattled history within which the greatest achievement has been survival. For 45 years, under the dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and Franco, the PCE was outlawed. Except for the Civil War years and the post-Franco expansion, the party has always been extremely small. Never well-endowed with original theorists, the PCE was characterised until 1968 by a slavish submission to the caprice of the Kremlin. Yet there is much for the Spanish Communists to be proud of. They organised the war effort against Franco and his Axis allies when every other group on the Republican side had failed. After the defeat of 1939, the PCE was the backbone of resistance against the dictatorship. As other groups fell by the wayside, the Communists kept up the pressure for a return to democracy in Spain. Indeed, if the PCE enjoys today its best image since 1936, it is in large part due to its contribution to the transition from dictatorship.

The PCE's improved image, despite 40 years of Francoist propaganda portraying it as an organisation of godless murderers, is a tribute to the efforts of its indefatigable secretary general, Santiago Carrillo. In his immensely successful books, *Dialogue on Spain* and *'Eurocommunism' and the State*, and in countless articles and speeches, Carrillo has managed to draw a discreet veil over the alleged crimes of the PCE during the Civil War and has created an appearance of moderate, independent, and above all non-Stalinist, thinking. The favourable impression caused by Carrillo in the European bourgeois press in 1977 was enhanced greatly when he was made the target of vitriolic Russian criticism. Virtually the only authoritative voice not to take the Kremlin's attitude as proof that the PCE was free of Stalinist remnants was Jorge Semprún.

Semprún had been a member of the PCE's politburo and a courageous underground leader. He was expelled from the party in 1965 along with Fernando Claudin. To the chagrin of the PCE's propagandists, Semprún's autobiography argued trenchantly that Carrillo could manufacture democratic credentials for the party only by falsifying its history. The book, which sold nearly 200,000 copies in less than a year, left a widespread suspicion that if Carrillo was not to be believed about the PCE's past, then he was at least to be doubted when he asserted its commitment to a democratic future. That Carrillo is fully aware of the relationship between the party's present image and its history was shown by his lengthy sixtieth anniversary speech. From his anthology of half truths, two stand out. The statement that, during the Civil War, the Communists defended the freedom of other parties was insulting to the anarchist and Trotskyist victims of the PCE's wartime policies. Connoisseurs of Carrillo's iron grip on the party apparatus could only cherish his admission that 'schematic simplifications of marxism' aside, he knew nothing of Stalinist practices until enlightened by Khrushchev's 1956 report.

It is understandable that Carrillo should be reticent about certain features of his stewardship of the PCE. Having won the battle for democratic credibility, he is reluctant to risk this fragile achievement by disinterring regrettable incidents from the past. Yet this is demonstrably a counter-productive approach. Carrillo's manifest distortions suggest rather sadly — and in public — that he does not think that the history of his own party and of his own leadership can stand up to scrutiny. The rigid and mechanistic view of history as something to be altered to serve the needs of the moment cannot but cut the PCE adrift from that very tradition of flexible and creative marxism with which it likes to associate itself.

The appearance in English of Semprún's evocative and stimulating memoirs at the same time as Burnett Bolloten's monumental critique of PCE policy during the Civil War provides a suitable moment for a reassessment of Carrillo's penchant for re-writing history. Both works are fascinating, if flawed, and both mount assaults on the fronts on which Carrillo has chosen to make a stand. Confronted only with Carrillo's untruths, they carry the day easily. Yet the fact that arguments can be mounted against them suggests that the PCE would be better served if the re-writing of history was discarded along with the rest of the Stalinist paraphernalia.

A United Press correspondent during the Spanish war, Burnett Bolloten has devoted most of his life subsequently to assembling the history of the Republican zone. The first fruit of his massive researches was *The Grand Camouflage*, published in 1961 but commercially eclipsed by the appearance of Hugh Thomas's altogether more popular *The Spanish Civil War*. Despite taking the story only as far as mid-May 1937, Bolloten's book made a great impact among specialists because of its painstaking erudition. Bolloten describes this new book as 'a vast revision and expansion' of the old. It is hardly that and is therefore likely to disappoint those who were awaiting the completion of the story truncated in 1961. There is new material on the origins of the war, largely from tendentious secondary sources. The fate of the Soviet advisers is now well covered. Material previously hidden in footnotes is incorporated into the text. The two major additions are a chapter on the events of May 1937 in Barcelona during which the PCE crushed the POUM and broke the remnants of anarchist power and a 26-page epilogue summarising the remaining two years of the war. However, despite failing to fulfil expectations, this splendidly produced edition of Bolloten's work remains one of the half-dozen most important books on the Spanish conflict.

Nevertheless, the profusion and detail of Bolloten's scholarship can only partly compensate for certain partisan eccentricities, the most striking of which is the withholding of an account of the post-May 1937 period on a scale commensurate with the treatment of the first 10 months of the war. The central thesis of the new book, as of the old, is that the Spanish Communists and the Comintern agents destroyed the social revolution in the Republican zone in the interests of Russian foreign policy. The Anglo-French non-intervention policy forced the Republic into the arms of Stalin whose help was conditioned by the need to prevent anything happening in Spain, such as a revolution, which might increase Western hostility to an alliance with the

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USSR. With meticulous zeal, Bolloten shows how the PCE allied with the right-wing Socialists and the bourgeois Republicans to dismantle the organs of proletarian power created after the 1936 military rising. PCE control of Soviet aid ensured that the Anti-Fascist Militia Committees acquiesced in the re-assertion of the bourgeois state apparatus, that spontaneous militia units were incorporated into the orthodox Popular Army and that collectivised industry and agriculture were brought under centralised control. This is all true, as it is also true that Soviet agents introduced the hatreds and paranoia of the Moscow purges into Spain, intimidating their leftist opponents with a wave of terror which included the torturing to death of the POUM leader, Andreu Nin.

Left-wing critics of Communist policy in Spain have argued persuasively that the forcible liquidation of the people's revolutionary conquests destroyed the popular enthusiasm which was the Republic's greatest weapon, and thereby made defeat inevitable. Bolloten does not follow the logic of his material to the point of adopting this pro-anarchist view. Indeed, he seems concerned only to condemn the Communists, which is easy enough to do but meaningless when done in an interpretative vacuum. Communist policy can be assessed seriously only in the light of its efficacy within the Republican war effort. This requires that it be placed in its proper context, which is the war against Franco and his Axis allies, and that it be judged in terms of the entire war. Bolloten seems curiously blinkered in this regard. He berates Stalin for protecting his interests but not Chamberlain and Blum for protecting theirs. He reproves the dismantling of the collectives when it is clear that their fragmented experimentation was inimical to the war effort. He criticises the dissolution of the militias despite the fact that they were being overrun by Franco's Moors.

In fact, neither the criminality of Stalinist methods nor the erosion of popular morale can obscure the extent to which many aspects of Communist policy were both realistic and inevitable. Rejected by the democracies, loyalist Spain faced certain defeat in the winter of 1936 until the Soviet Union intervened. Thereafter, the Communists showed that they understood the decisive nature of the military problem as the anarchists and left-wing Socialists had not done. This is not to excuse the dictatorial nature of Communist policy in Spain. It is, however, to say that to pass judgment on that policy without recalling that a war against fascism was going on is as unhistorical, in its way, as the untruths of Santiago Carrillo.

Semprún's book is understandably not notable for its scholarly objectivity. Denominated a novel in Spain, which it is not, despite having many of the qualities of a good novel, it is about memory. Semprún uses his experiences as a clandestine party organiser as a vehicle for an examination of the functioning of his own memory and of the deliberate disfunctioning of the PCE's collective memory. The technique used is reminiscent of his novels; one set of memories opening up another like Russian dolls. The central theme is Federico Sánchez's growing awareness of the distance between the realities of economic development in Spain in the late 1950s and a party line which cheerfully predicted the imminent overthrow of Franco. Along with Fernando Claudin, he was impelled to begin an examination of the state of internal democracy within the party. Their efforts led to their expulsion.

Semprún's consequent bitterness is amply expressed in this often emotional book. As well as vividly portraying his life in clandestinity, the autobiography conveys Semprún's tendency to be thrilled by danger. The book's strongest language, however, is reserved to express his resentment of Carrillo's authoritarian leadership. What is lacking — and it is hardly surprising — is any sympathy for Carrillo's plight when presented with the Claudin-Semprún critiques of the party line. It would not be easy telling militants that, after 25 years of stuggle against Franco, his dictatorship was enjoying the sort of boom which could extend it for another 25 years. Even if it were argued that Carrillo silenced Claudin and Semprún to avoid the divisions which might have followed the adoption of their analyses, that would still not justify the stifling of debate. Nevertheless, an historical judgment of the PCE in the 1960s, as in the 1930s, requires that its activities be put in context.

The context was a long struggle against a violently anti-Communist regime. Throughout the 37 years of anti-Franco resistance, there was no group, from the anarchists and Maoists to the Christian Democrats and monarchists, that did not succumb to depression and division. In such a perspective, Carrillo's tight control of the party apparatus and his defence of an artificially optimistic line might be considered comprehensible. But that is still a long way from justifying the historical distortions of Carrillo's writings and speeches. To make the PCE more attractive, its secretary general seeks to re-write its history, erasing its Stalinist past. It is Semprún's achievement to have reminded him that there is nothing so typical of Stalinism as the manufacture of an arbitrary history by those who have conveniently lost their memories.

Gillian Wilce

Market Values

Thy Neighbour's Wife by GAY TALESE *Collins* £7.95

There's not a lot in this book, practically nothing in fact, about the exhilaration, devastation, difficulty, pain, funniness or sexiness of sexual relations. There is, on the other hand, quite a lot about Kleenex. A biased view, of course. But the bias did set in gradually under the weight of the book's inertness. Mr Talese spent nine years on it, doing consumer research, interviewing and observing sexual activities. He also worked very hard to get people to allow the use of their real names. He needn't have bothered. Although we watch some fairly intimate goings-on, the 'well-proportioned', 'pretty, blue-eyed', 'slender, dark', 'elegant and gray-haired' people involved simply *aren't* real. The instant biographies provided with each introduction don't help and, although some of the characters end up — and even end — pretty messily, it's impossible to care about them.

On page 521 'a lean, dark-eyed man of forty-three' enters; he turns out, embarrassingly, to be the author. 'Prostitutes', we learn, 'had never really appealed to [Talese]. . . But he responded very much to the college-educated masseuse.' He also confesses that this chap Talese has been worried about the organisation of his book and about whether he has anything new to say. After such a pre-emptive acknowledgment, it seems churlish to pick on him for these very weaknesses. So, let's be churlish. The book's structure *shows*, and its overt artificiality makes it all the more novelettish. Stories are picked up and put down for no better reason than fear of the reader's becoming bored. Joins are cobbled together out of such unamazing coincidences as the fact that Harold Rubin, massage-parlour proprietor and exemplar of teenage wanking, once bought girlie mags from the very same shop in Chicago where Hugh Hefner, successful publisher of soft porn, also once bought girlie mags.

There is some interesting stuff here and there — about the way that the anti-porn brigade operated, the changes in censorship legislation (somewhat wearisomely presented as action replays of whole trials complete with participants' thoughts) and the 19th-century Christian community at Oneida which believed that possessive love was *wrong* and total sharing *right* — but in general one sympathises with Mr Talese's anxiety about the novelty of his material. The details, of how a handful of people become involved in group sexual activity, of the establishing of *Screw* magazine, of the functioning of massage-parlours, add little to the generally prevalent, if vague, knowledge that such things exist.

The trouble is that *Thy Neighbour's Wife* doesn't raise questions, except by default. I shouldn't imagine it raises much else either. It didn't give me so much as a frisson of fellow-feeling. A compelling communication of sensual pleasure, a re-presentation of people *enjoying* themselves, might have provided more of a rationale for the book. As might the offering of premises for argument about sexual mores in the West today. The vaunted objectivity proves merely dull and frustrating. There's no passion here — mental, ethical, sexual or even anthropological. And there's no sense of humour or proportion either. Mr Talese solemnly claims to be dealing with one of the greatest issues of his time. But you

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begin to have doubts about his discernment of issues when he equates the sexual jealousy of one John Bullaro with the deaths of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Of course sexual jealousy is painful, very, but it's hardly in the same league as assassinations and riots. And if there is a connection, a reason why we should see them all as part of the same 'turmoil', Mr Talese omits to tell us.

Moreover, there isn't even the echo of a giggle in his voice when he reveals that 'in his more visionary moments, sitting in his round bed in his private aeroplane. . . Hugh Hefner saw himself as the embodiment of the masculine dream'. The relentless length at which he describes Hefner's life and furniture suggests it's all too probable that Gay Talese shares this 'vision'. It's all the fault of the penis, you see, that 'most honest organ', 'endlessly searching, sensing, expanding, probing, penetrating, throbbing, wilting and wanting more'. The penis (and you may have missed this bit in biology class) is 'rooted in man's soul'; it certainly seems to have tipped Mr Talese off balance.

As you might infer from his organic orientation, Mr Talese is not so hot on the sexual nature of women. He doesn't understand them; he says so. He occasionally comments favourably on some woman's 'masculine' ability to take her sexual pleasure as she pleases and without fuss. He makes a gesture towards feminism in his chapter on Betty Dodson and her paintings. But he doesn't even try to consider sexual roles off the couch, or homosexuality, or sex education, or the possible limits of freedom. No reason he should, of course, except that his subtitle — 'sex in the world today' — sort of suggested that he just might.

What Mr Talese mostly writes about is sex as a commodity. The sexual freedom he seems to endorse is the freedom to buy a hand-job, to make money from pornography, to purchase your way into a leisured sexual free-for-all. He talks at one point about the fast-food business of sex. His visit to Europe — made in the interests of research but productive of exactly one paragraph — served only to confirm his view that 'women sold sexual pleasure; men bought it', everywhere. And, even if he is sometimes, in some places, partly right, he does not seem to have noticed what it is that he has said, let alone wondered whether it matters and why it should be so.

This is a smooth-surfaced, silicone book, manufactured for a market. But it is a disappointing buy, over-packaged, over-sold and unsatisfying.

Kerry Schott

A Community?

Uncommon Market by STUART HOLLAND
Macmillan £10 *Papermac* £2.95

Almost 20 years ago, in July 1961, the Macmillan government began negotiating the terms of British entry into the Common Market. The debate aroused at that time was hardly inspiring and over the years its quality has barely improved. The Left tend to regard the EEC as a simple capitalist conspiracy which snatches British sovereignty for the West Germans and the French, and in the process leaves us with astronomical food prices.

The fears may be justified, the facts correct but where is the analysis?

The arguments of pro-Marketeers have not been any more firmly based. To them the EEC is a great venture in internationalism and it is only as part of it that Britain's economic survival can be guaranteed and her good sense brought to bear on foreign policy issues.

All this rhetoric is in part caused by the common tendency of both pro- and anti-Market forces to treat political and economic issues as it they were strictly separable, and quite devoid of any historical and class background. Stuart Holland's little book is interesting because it tries to break away from this sterile mould. His argument, which incidentally seems to have entirely escaped proof reading, raises a host of problems. Its strength lies in the interesting questions it raises.

First we get a very brief glimpse of the history of EEC institutions and their policies from the 1957 Treaty of Rome to the notoriously familiar Common Agricultural Policy. There is little analysis of any sort here and no attempt to explain why the EEC was thought so desirable and indeed what groups thought so? It is also curious that the United States gave such unfailing support to the EEC's conception and birth when de Gaulle was canvassing support for it specifically in order to challenge American hegemony.

It would also be interesting to know why so much power was vested in the Commission. Is this an example of Poulantzas's thesis that Parliament and representative democracy are in decline? Whatever the answer there certainly is little democracy within the European Community. True, the elected Assembly can pass a censure motion on the Commission. But there must be a two-thirds majority for such a motion, and the end result of a censure is the sacking of the whole Commission. In effect, censure is a big blunt axe and its use unlikely. More minor amendments to legislation are possible to modify the budget, but only if the size of the budget is not increased. In reality we elect people to a European Assembly which has about as much power as Bismarck's Reichstag. The real power then lay with the Kaiser; now it lies with the Commission.

The documentation of major EEC policies is also interesting. The Common Agricultural Policy gobbles up 72 per cent of the Community's resources and leaves little for either European industry or social and welfare policies. A commonly agreed industrial policy seems about as likely as an English summer without rain. Planning is impossible because the conflict, both between different types of capital in each nation, and between national capitals, seems irreconcilable. The pro-Marketeers' dream, of a supranational state acting in unity, has dissolved, and not even monetary integration will bring it back. These issues have been touched on before by Holland and others, in *Beyond Capitalist Planning*, but here the ideas are put in a broader framework.

The analysis of the EEC that Holland uses combines Poulantzas's ideas about fractions of capital with a base-superstructure model. Both these separate abstractions have been a matter of dispute for some time and it is fair to say that most Marxists have abandoned the crude base-superstructure model. Poulantzas would roll in his grave at the sight of it and E. P. Thompson has been criticising it for years. There are two basic problems. First, the base-superstructure model is ahistorical and second it inevitably leads to functional analysis. Holland is aware of this but persists. At the base of the EEC we have national labour and multinational capital; resting on this base is the superstructure made up of the European Assembly and Commission. In between, in a messy sort of a way, he interposes ideology.

This model does allow Holland to organise his material and to discuss class struggle within the EEC. Nevertheless, as the critics suggest, the model does not permit anything but a superficial treatment of historical forces and nor does it directly lead to any prescriptions for political action. Up to a point the Holland analysis allows a discussion of present-day forces and recent events but it begins to fail when pushed to consider future policy considerations within the EEC context nor is it much use on international issues.

This lack of connection between theory and action is evident in virtually all the current Marxist theories of the state so it is hardly fair to expect Holland to solve the problem. He does, however, make it evident that socialists need to think more deeply about the EEC, and in a less insular way.

William Jay Smith

On The Edge

For Gregory on his twenty-first birthday

I

On autumn days when the sky behind
The Vermont mountain opened into a giant
gray-blue
Clam shell over us, and birches
By the disjointed skeleton of an old wall
Rose like the thin white spotted legs
Of dangling puppets
We went out to gather mushrooms.
You walk beside me bird-quick, springing
Over wet leaves past the delicate deadly
Amanitas so new and orange-flushed
They seemed to breathe. you crept by
them under
A heavy pine branch edged with mist
To pick the ruddy numb of the boletus —
Reaching where I could not reach —
And you were my own arm extending into
time,
Bringing reality close up,
Giving colour and dimension to the day.

II

On the edge of manhood I found you in an
Austrian hotel,
Strong and tall, your black eyes commanding
the scene:
You have come down from that higher
mountain where
In thin transparent air
Your senses played you false
And the couple on the ledge a mile away
Seemed near enough to touch, the cowbell
On the distant mountain rang next to your ear,
Crisp in the Alpine stillness.

III

There your gaze was true, and you reached
Out to steady me,
Who had tried with you to find
The brother and the son who had lost his way,
Fleeing through hemlock-shaded hollows . . .
And you steadied me that day
Beside a chasm I had barely crossed
Where in a darkening wood below
Pointed fir trees ringed the evening light
And a few stars rose in a clear line
To guide a young man lost.

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Fred Steward

Red Experts & Expert Reds

Science and Industrialisation in the USSR by ROBERT LEWIS *Macmillan* £12
Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin by KENDALL E. BAILES *Princeton* £18.40 & £7.10
The Technical Intelligentsia and the Soviet State by NICHOLAS LAMPERT *Macmillan* £12

Writing in the *New Statesman and Nation* in 1931, Nikolai Bukharin, then head of industrial research in the USSR, delcared that the construction of socialism required 'a gigantic development of science unknown to previous epochs'. As leader of a delegation visiting a scientific congress in London, his calls for an 'ever increasing planned quality of scientific research' and for an 'ever greater influence of science on the very construction of the economic plan' fell upon the sympathetic ears of British socialist scientists such as Joseph Needham and J.D. Bernal, frustrated at the lowly status given science by the British government.

The contacts made at the time, closely monitored, incidentally, by the Metropolitan Police on behalf of the Home Office, played some part in ensuring the subsequent emergence in Britain of a significant movement for the 'planning of science'. The optimism of this movement, reflected in a view that decisions to expand science, and increase the role of technical experts in social and economic decisions, were essentially beneficial, was often expressed in an uncritical admiration of the Soviet model. Such adulation ultimately foundered on the rock of Lysenkoism and its origins have recently been the subject of extensive criticism within the contemporary radical science movement.

These three books provide an invaluable resource for assessing the background to such issues in the Soviet context. Each is an important contribution to the analysis of the politics of Soviet technology and of the social position of technical experts from the Bolshevik revolution to the outbreak of the second world war.

In *Science and Industrialisation in the USSR* Robert Lewis provides a detailed, empirical study of the investment in, and organisation of, technical research from 1917 to 1940. Heavily laden with acronyms and statistical detail, it is a useful interpretation of the fragmented and contradictory data available. It confirms claims that a vast expansion of science took place, showing a 30-fold increase in real expenditure between 1924 and 1940. In relative terms the proportion of the national income devoted to science in 1935 was nearly double that of the United States.

Lewis questions whether the effectiveness and productivity of the research effort kept pace with its growth. He points to the heavy reliance on the importation of Western technology and the continuing difficulties in achieving successful industrial innovation. Although there were structural reasons, such as the emphasis placed on the 'research institute' in the Soviet R&D system, wider political factors entered the debates over the centralisation of research planning.

The relationship of the technical intelligentsia to the political environment is the central theme of the works by Bailes and Lampert. In *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin,* Kendall Bailes gives a fascinating account, rich in historical detail and masterly in scope, of the political relations of the technical intelligentsia up to 1941. He shows how the inheritance by the Bolsheviks of a stratum of technical experts, trained and established under Tsarism, proved to be both of practical value and a source of political conflict. In the initial aftermath of the October Revolution, shop-floor mistrust of the so-called 'bourgeois specialists' coincided with the Party leadership's hostility to those sections of intelligentsia who were actively opposed to the Soviet regime. The resulting widespread harassment was difficult to control. A shift in policy was rapidly promoted, particularly by Lenin and his personal secretary, Gorbunov, since the experts were recognised as indispensable to socialist construction. Physical protection was given to specialists along with privileged rations and even an extension of research facilities during the ravages of the Civil War. As a result the majority managed to survive the post-revolutionary years in spite of severe losses.

A rapprochement between the 'non-expert reds' and the 'non-red experts' endured for most of the 1920s in spite of sporadic, officially disapproved 'specialist-baiting' from below. A drastic change in course occurred in 1928 with the show trial of mine engineers, from the Shakhty region, accused of sabotage and conspiracy. Instigated with Stalin's approval, against the wishes of some other Bolshevik leaders, it heralded three years of trials and harassment of specialists working in industry and in the planning bodies. These attacks on the 'old specialists' were accompanied by moves to create a new generation of technicians who were both 'expert' and 'red'. By 1931, when the first waves of the new specialists were entering industry, the campaign of terror against the earlier generation was drawing to a close. Although in the late 1930s the technical intelligentsia, along with other social groups, were decimated by the purges, they were not singled out for special political vilification.

Nicholas Lampert's tightly argued *The Technical Intelligentsia and the Soviet State* lucidly poses some of the theoretical problems involved in the interpretation of these events. His analysis of the relationship of intellectuals to the working class suggests a major difference between the two main periods of turbulence that specifically affected the technical experts.

The initial conflicts in the aftermath of revolution were in a context of worker control and genuine political debates at the enterprise level about the role of managerial and technical expertise in democratic structures. The restoration of the authority of engineers and managers in order to cope with the harsh requirements of physical survival resolved these debates in practice. At the theoretical level, Kollontai's view of an irreconcileable antagonism between the specialists and the working class was defeated by Lenin's argument that there was an inherent need in modern industry for one-man management and expert control. Both of these positions were unsatisfactory in their treatment of 'technical' and 'class' issues because, in effect, they subordinated one to the other. This made for subsequent difficulties.

The period 1928-31 was pervaded by military language and the imagery of class war. The failure to achieve over-ambitious targets under the Five Year Plan against a backdrop of legal enforcement led to experts being used as convenient scape-goats. Specialists also became engulfed in the burgeoning inner-party struggle, particularly those working in the planning organs. The Industrial Party trial of specialists dealt a major blow to those close to Bukharin. Claims that the pressures on the technical strata were part of a cultural transformation from detached professionalism to political commitment to the working class are shown by Lampert to be insecurely founded. First, the relationship of experts to the working class had been boiled down to political loyalty to the institutions of Party and State. Secondly, the use of coercion and the law, reflecting an inability to employ discussion and persuasion to win voluntary changes, proved to be counter productive.

While it was possible to erode certain features of the technical specialists such as professional scepticism and group loyalty, the outcome was by no means the creation of the enthusiastic and partisan experts envisaged in political pronouncements. Instead there was a growing trend towards silent compliance, careerism and opportunism based on supposedly 'political' criticisms among fellow specialists — a patronage system skilfully manipulated by Stalin.

The creation of this new stratum of 'loyal' experts hindered independent and creative contributions to a distinctively socialist process of technological change. Although the social composition of the experts became much broader, most notably in the case of women, this was not accompanied by a more democratic relationship with the working class.

Ironically, as Bailes illustrates so well, there was in the 1930s a perpetuation, and even an extension, of an elite role for technical experts and an elevation in the society at large of technocratic ideals, through symbols such as aviation. The technical intelligentsia themselves were accorded a materially privileged position and were promoted as a social model for all Soviet citizens to aspire to. The ultimate outcome of what purported to be an attack on technocratic values was in practice their embodiment in Soviet society.

The failure to develop new popular and democratic forms for the practice of science and technology reflected the exigencies of industrialisation and repression along with the continuing inability to develop a political theory adequate to the task. The echoes of this are to be found in the approach of the British socialist scientists of the 1930s who, in their assessments of the Soviet Union, allowed the impressive, but primarily quantitative, indicators of scientific growth to overshadow the political and problematic aspects of its development.

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Simon Blow

Who is Sarah?

Maybe by LILLIAN HELLMAN *Macmillan* £3.95
Homelands by JOHN WILES *Constable* £6.95
The Sorry Papers by DON BAILEY *Dobson* £7.50 & £3
Silk and Steel by STEPHEN ALTER *Deutsch* £5.95

In Lillian Hellman's novel memoir *Maybe*, Sarah Cameron — who we are to believe is real — has moved elusively around the perimeter of the author's existence for far too long; Ms Hellman's object is to reveal a character who wilfully remains unknowable. When writing her volumes of autobiography Lillian Hellman told herself that she had at least a version of the truth to guide her, and that she knew her characters well, but with Sarah Cameron she is dogged by uncertainties, lack of sound information and falsehoods. Maybe then there are no truths, suggests Ms Hellman. Statement taken, except that Sarah Cameron is not a friend, she is an acquaintance, where distance can be intentional.

Sarah and Lillian met first over 40 years ago. During their wanderings across Europe and America they have continued to meet at night clubs and cocktail parties and, on occasion, they have had the same lovers. But now that Lillian thinks she would like the answer to Sarah, no sooner does she approach than Sarah evaporates behind lies and fantasies. Sarah told Lillian that she sent her an invitation to her wedding when quite blatantly she didn't. She said it was Ottoline Morrell on the terrace of the hotel in the Loire when Lillian discovers that it wasn't. Yet somewhere there must be a clue to Sarah, Lillian insists, and Sarah's husband, Carter Cameron, replies, no problem. Sarah's 'trip' is the spur of the moment.

So are we to take it that Sarah is simply bored with life and driven to invent, or is there, as events might suggest, a darker side? Lillian's chance encounter with her many years on in Rome takes the mystery to a bewildering standstill: Sarah is not Sarah Cameron; she never has been; her name is Signora Pinelli. Lillian returns to probe Cameron who seems to have a conclusive explanation, until he too covers his tracks and deletes his identity. Poor truth-starved Lillian is left with a handful of uncomfortable dead-ends and the acceptance that there are those who prefer not to submit to her diviner's gaze.

Doubtless Ms Hellman intends us to be as tantalised as she is by her human unknowable, but I must confess that in this case I am more on the side of the Camerons. Whatever sinister tricks they may or may not have played, they have done well to avoid Ms Hellman's rather inquisitorial scrutiny. People do not like being stared at. Ms Hellman would have done better to apply her test to someone she *thought* she knew well. Nonetheless her surreal recall of incidents is skilfully handled, and she can make a sharp observation, but with the ultimate failure of her quest point and purpose run thin.

With one country grafted on to him after another, it is a need to identify that obsesses Warren Linden in John Wiles's new novel *Homelands*. Linden is German by ancestry, South African by birth and British by domicile. He is a distinguished, freelance stage director and it is an invitation to Dusseldorf to direct a play with some strong left-wing ideology that brings his allegiances under pressure. The play is unpopular with influential businessmen who fear that it will stir up a new wave of terrorism, and throughout the weeks of rehearsal Linden is plagued by some nasty threats. But the trouble sets him thinking. Does he owe his belief that the arts should be freed of politics to the liberal English attitude he has absorbed? In Germany it is different, and he has German blood. Then again, he is neither English nor German, he is South African, and should he not have returned there with his former boyfriend, Noel, and fought apartheid? But he does have roots in England; an ex-wife, two children and Karen, the woman he lives with. It is only the tension of the play which prevents Linden from cracking under his gathering, personal crisis.

John Wiles's novel has plenty of intelligent content and the writing is vivid and alert, and yet it is not quite the memorable book it ought to be. Perhaps it is that Wiles has made too many large ideas dependent on Linden, and Linden does not have the fictional stature to carry them off. There is a tiresome whine to his asides on his bisexuality, his lack of roots and the collapsed state of England. Most successful is the controversy over the play's production, which engages irrespective of Linden's arch, nanny patter.

The characters in Don Bailey's slim collection of stories, *The Sorry Papers*, are all a little rootless too, but not through loss of country. Set in Don Bailey's native Canada, his stories deal mainly with drifters, criminals, missed opportunity, loneliness — in short, the tough human lot. The themes may be familiar but he tackles them with vigour and at his best Bailey can write with a twist that both shocks and saddens. A recently widowed woman is holding a Garage Sale to sweep death and memory clean from her house. But 47 years are not easy to forget. An old man passes and tells her that he tried the same, and it didn't work. Now he sits every evening doing the knitting, just as his wife had done for 51 years. Together they move the furniture back into the house. In another, an inventive boy tells his teacher a cruel story that turns out to parallel her own sufferings. The boy can't understand why she cries when the class laughs. But this volume seems to offer only a foretaste of what Bailey can do, and it will be interesting to see how he extends his range.

The rewards for historical novels tend to be in their sales figures rather than in literary satisfaction, and I'm afraid that Stephen Alter's *Silk and Steel* does not reverse the balance. The place and time is India in 1813 in the days when Mogul rule was still supreme, but on the wane. It was a playground for reckless fortune-seekers and James Webley, once a spirited young Englishman, is now jaded and in his fifties. In General Webley's charge is the youthful Colonel Augustine, half-Indian half-English, who spurs Webley back to his former dash. Augustine finds him a gentle Indian girl to rouse his blood. Seeking aid from the Newab in Lucknow they depart to rescue Webley's brigand army from the invading British in Hindustan. Except the plan ends in tragedy, but not without Webley's swashbuckling image restored.

Stephen Alter, who lives in India, is clearly sound on Anglo-Indian history, but to peg it to this kind of historical fiction is to invite all the dreadful flaws of the genre. The only authenticity here is in the description of the dissipated court at Lucknow and in the portrait of the Orientalist scholar, Dr Marlow. But Alter can write, and this makes it the stranger that he should have devised such a tarnished romance to evoke the period.

Francis Wheen

Sleuthing

A Talent to Deceive: An Appreciation of Agatha Christie by ROBERT BARNARD *Collins* £5.95
Dorothy L. Sayers: Nine Literary Studies by TREVOR H. HALL *Duckworth* £12.50

In a famous essay, Edmund Wilson once asked: 'Who cares who killed Roger Ackroyd?' Robert Barnard's reply is that an awful lot of people care: paperback Agatha Christies have sold well over 200 million copies in the United States alone; her world sales are well above four hundred million; and she is the world's third best-selling author, after Shakespeare and the Bible. Having dealt briskly with Wilson's question, Barnard sets out to answer a considerably more interesting one: *Why* do people care?

One of the many joys of *A Talent to Deceive* is the fact that Barnard is honest about Christie's inadequacies and does not try to emulate the absurd pretentions of so much modern writing about crime fiction and thrillers. He likens her style to a suet pudding. He cheerfully admits that her characterisation is rudimentary and always drawn from a stock repertoire — the pompous Anglo-Indian colonel, the acid tongued spinster, the vulgar, newly-rich businessman and so on. Her books are set in an eternal Fairyland disguised as the classier end of an English village, where poverty and dirt are dealt with in a throwaway subordinate clause. And in a chapter on her disastrous 'thrillers' (such as *Destination Unknown* and the almost unreadable *Passenger to Frankfurt*) Barnard points out that Christie's social and racial attitudes were sometime merely hilarious — 'The Bolshevists are behind the labour unrest, but this man is *behind the Bolshevists*' — but were occasionally of an offensiveness that showed an extraordinary insensitivity. As late as the early Thirties Christie could perpetrate a remark such as: 'He's a Jew, of course, but a frightfully decent one.'

Thus Barnard does not fall into the elephant-trap which swallows up those critics who claim to see in, let us say, the James Bond books a profound statement about the human condition; but nor does he accept the stricture of Edmund Wilson and his successors, who dismiss Christie's works on the ground that they are beneath contempt as novels. Barnard argues that crime writers such as Agatha Christie are writing in the tradition of the *ta* rather than the novel: *'Roger Ackroyd* is not failed *Middlemarch*, and nothing but confusion results from trying to judge it by the same criteria.' The basis of Christie's success as a popular writer is the way she structures her books on a pattern of progressive mystific

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tion and progressive enlightenment. She is writing stories where facts and incidents are of prime importance, and the characters must remain subordinate to the puzzle which called them into existence. Barnard also argues that it is the very anonymity of Christie's characters which accounts for her universal appeal: readers in, say, Italy or Norway can superimpose the human types with which they themselves are familiar. Barnard puts his case vigorously and amusingly, and his book deserves to be read.

Trevor H. Hall's *Nine Literary Studies* is a slighter work, but no less enjoyable. Dr Hall's 'literary studies' are mainly concerned with the marginal aspects of Dorothy L. Sayers's career. When, for instance, did she write *Busman's Honeymoon*? Dr Hall gives us a whole essay on the matter. Did her husband, Atherton Fleming, assist in the writing of the Wimsey books? How did she come to commit 'a gigantic howler' in *The Documents in the Case?* Was a supposed 'first printing' of an essay on Dr Watson actually a reprint?

I shouldn't think that these questions have ever troubled your slumbers, but Dr Hall presents his answers with such enthusiasm and charm that one is quite captivated. Moreover the book contains two gems. One is a fascinating discussion of the similarities between Wimsey and Sherlock Holmes, and the other is a brilliant piece of literary sleuthing whereby Dr Hall solves once and for all the mystery surrounding the identity of 'Robert Eustace', who collaborated with Dorothy L. Sayers on *The Documents in the Case*. (It turns out that both the *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books* and the *Library of Congress Catalog* have given the credit to the wrong man.) Dr Hall's fondness for thorough research is infectious but at £12.50 for 132 pages his book may, sadly, never emerge from quarantine.

Ron Butlin

A Fellow-traveller

Where timbrel, gong and drone sound
invisibly;
where colours come only to those cuts of fruit
I dip into the spring and then to the patches of
hard bark,
sand and the few slender stems I splash
in raising the fruit to my lips — there I drink
deeply.

As the morning's heat sets the desert
contours vibrating
so I — the more slow, the more dull with each
mouthful of clear water —
see between the several moments of the day,
between
the certainties of hunger and thirst, slopes of
soft sand
stretching to the distance. — And between
them,

between these shifting grains which a single
breath of wind
could cause to cut me to the heart and make
my eyes weep, I see a fellow-traveller
approach:
drawn, perhaps by the sound of unseen
musicians
or the promise of water and fruit, to the same
mirage.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Anne Karpf

A Sailor's Life

Many, if not most, radio producers still believe, like the Duchess in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, that take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves. Quantities of radio programmes are constructed with minimal regard to their sound, and critics likewise often respond by sieving out and retaining information alone, as if the radio form were incidental and not crucial to the enterprise.

Michael Mason is a dissident, who is preoccupied with sound to the point where he risks pomposity — he has even coined his own piece of jargon, 'audiophony', which he uses in the sense of 'the music of the whole sound'. But to his credit he's alive to the dangers of grand theorising, and its subsequent translation into practice.

Yet since the art of radio is so woefully bereft of its own literature, as Mason sees it he has no choice other than to generate his own theory — and damn the risks.

His current epic is the 26-part series *The British Seafarer,* which recently ended its first run on Radio 4 at part 9, and will be resuming with part 10 in October. His previous ventures have included *The Long March of Everyman* ('a history of the people of Britain'), and *Plain Tales from the Raj*. He finds that radio is still dogged by literary thinking, and few of its practitioners think in terms of sound, as a composer would.

By contrast, Michael Mason's productions always credit him as 'composer'. But this doesn't just mean transplanting snatches of *musique concrète* or punctuating a programme with natural sounds, for the use of words makes it hard to by-pass rationality and pretend that a radio feature is a symphony.

He is also much taken with the visual properties of radio and, like the great radio producers of the thirties who aspired to be radiophonic Eisensteins (and sometimes succeeded), he is drawn to the montage style. For this reason his name has been bracketed a little too closely with that of Charles Parker, originator of the radio ballad. In truth, their programmes differ hugely. Certainly, Mason is a great admirer of Parker, dubbing him 'a real creative genius in radio', and was greatly impressed by Parker's imaginative use of sound and his respect for oral history. They also worked together on *The Long March of Everyman*, but there the brackets close. Mason doesn't have Parker's politics, and he's more obsessed with Zen Buddhism than the folk ballad, finding it offers him more of a 'tradition of sound' than anything in European culture.

The present series aims to avoid a yo-ho-ho view of seafarers, a romantic account spun from the imagination of literary landsmen. Mason wants to demythologise, but not to debunk, since he's aware that the legend of the sea is part of its history, and there's no doubt that he's more than a little sea-struck himself. The allegiance of the series rests firmly with sailors.

It foregrounds their physical sufferings in its chronological unfolding of life at sea. It moves from the most primitive ships to the most sophisticated, it examines their changing functions and journeys, it takes in commerce and trade, greedy shipowners, innovative navigation, and great sea-heroes like Cooke.

But above all, the series emphasises the ordinary sailor's fetid and scabrous life: slums, smells, sodomy, starvation — a catalogue of sibilant rottenness.

Mason's style is voracious: it devours original letters, laws, histories, documents, lists, interviews, commentary, drama, music — anything and everything which will help him log the sailor's daily life.

There is no doubt that Mason ranks among the most imaginative radio producers, but how successful has he been in this project? After a promising opening programme, the series has largely disappointed. Some of its faults were evident in the first programme, which tottered on the edge of sententiousness to which it later capitulated. The programme, an announcer informed us, offered two commentaries: that of the programme consultant, and 'the voice of the seafaring experience — past and present — which does not change, because the sea does not change'. Nor, it appeared, did the commentary, which repeated this cosmic generalisation each week, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the social relations of sailors were changing each week in the developing history described by the series.

It is also a little fraudulent to talk of two commentaries, for two commentaries constitute a dialogue but one commentary makes for an authority figure. For all their importance, the sailors' accounts in this series didn't have the narratively central role of commentary, a position occupied some of the time by a fruity admiral voice with a predilection for mercantile truisms such as 'the sea is a great leveller'.

The very existence of the narrator relegates the sailors' experience to secondary position, needing to be ordered and shaped by an objective expert. And for all its antipathy to romanticism, the series doesn't altogether avoids *Boys' Own* bombast in its depiction of seafaring achievements. Even where it frequently foregoes a rosy view of ships, it doesn't adopt a dun-coloured one in lieu: descriptions of putrid conditions, vicious floggings, and universal corruption are just as capable as Hornblower heroics of mythologising a sailor's life.

But the saddest feature of all is that, for most of the time (and with some distinguished exceptions), the programmes don't work as compositions.

Part of the problem, I feel, is the sheer self-consciousness of the acting: the dramatised passages twitch with mannerisms, and are packed with obviously stage sailors whose most extensive experience of the sea is the cross-channel ferry, and whose greatest trial is queueing for the duty-free. By contrast, the

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oral history recordings offer a rich variety of rasping voices and curling accents. Compellingly genuine reminiscence is rudely followed by recreated theatrics, and the juxtaposition of these two modes — the authentic and the cod — produces an ugly aural mismatch — a textural shock which reduces the credibility of the whole.

The series is also distinguished by its curious dearth of music, which might at least have unified the different techniques into a single composition. But Mason deliberately held off from a liberal use of music, since he was anxious not to impose romantic themes on something much starker. And he was studiously sparing with the shanties, since they were composed only from 1830 to 1890, and have been so over-exposed. Indeed, in his self-restraint and his efforts not to falsify 'factual information' or do violence to his material by over-exercising the imagination, he has ended up by satiating his listeners. His overly respectful stance to his sources means that he deluges us with detail, unwilling to discriminate between a mass of gobbets. Not only has this produced a bulk-buy documentary, but also the listener is buffeted by account after account, before managing to absorb the last one. And the swift succession of gnomic description and pithy anecdote (and the veritable orgy of cross-fades) leaves us curiously unengaged emotionally, for all the physical horrors evoked.

Such productions are frequently attacked for their self-indulgence and tricksiness, yet my complaint here is that, in a sense, Mason hasn't been indulgent or tricksy enough. He needed to plunge in and synthesise, to blend, and not as he has, to mix. In short, to compose.

Which is not to say that there aren't some good things in the series. Mason is capable of producing some very fine sounds indeed. Programme six on navigation was masterly, with haunting music from the Radiophonic workshop beautifully moulded into the programme, and a fruitful tension between the mathematical accounts of Euclidian navigation and the sweaty feel of the hopelessly-lost man on the deck. He has also exhumed some resonant descriptions — 'of sailors with nothing to eat but tallow and young blackamoors . . . and cutting a greasy buff jerkin in tripes and broiling it for their dinners'. In odd places, he achieves a real anti-history: the Armada is passed over in favour of less glorious battles.

The British Seafarer is at its best when it's at its most subjective, when we leave behind the public rhetoric and move to a more intimate level.

When Mason allows us to dwell a little on an individual description, when he brings up the music, his skills emerge. Programme one was impressionistic and subjective — even audaciously kicked off with a recording of the first moon-shot — to good effect. Yet ultimately, is the series any more than a prettified feature?

The danger is that Mason is overturning the Duchess, so that in his preoccupation with sounds, he fails in sense. The programme on Cooke, for example, gave us a standard and uncritical view of the man. In the end, the series so far has given us no real handle on the life and work of seafarers, no framework in which to make sense of their history. The challenge of marrying sound and sense continues.

War Stories

ROBERT HEWISON at a conference on military literature

'Military literature is like pornography: it consists largely of mass sales to males, the books are psychologically basic, and they tend to be very repetitive. Military literature lacks academic respectability.' This is a provocative way to begin a conference on the nature of military literature, and it sounded even more provocative in the soldierly setting of Dettingen Company Ante-Room at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. As crisp commands echoed from the parade ground, the Academy's Department of War Studies and its guests settled down to spend a weekend trying to discover the essential unity of this ill-defined, but in its commercial aspects, highly popular genre.

The success of such a project depends on whom you invite to discuss the proposition, and the diffusiveness of the subject was underlined by the disparate occupations of the 30 odd people who took part, from academic specialists in war studies like John Keegan and Brian Bond to military publishers like Leo Cooper and the creators of war games; from official historians to such journalists and literary critics as Ian Parsons and Andrew Rutherford. War stories being the order of the day, the contributors took an anecdotal approach that suited the British reluctance to theorise. Lacking a theory, the unifying concern of military literature turned out to be the problem of most writing: how to get at the truth, and if so, which truth.

As far as official military histories are concerned, it quickly turned out that the official truth is not necessarily the whole truth at all. Army history — as opposed to military literature — tends to be regimental history, aimed at fostering pride and tradition, and as M.R.D. Foot, the official historian of SOE pointed out, that means there can be 'no weak officers or unwilling men'. Unpublicised mutinies of the second world war were a popular topic of table-talk. However much the official historian strives to get at the truth, he is subject to censorship, in what he is allowed to see, what he is allowed to say, and even, it appears, in how he is allowed to punctuate it. The technological advances of the Public Record Office in their new buildings at Kew are viewed with suspicion, for the power of government to pre-censor material has also been much advanced. Beyond official censorship, there is also self-censorship, and official biographers like Ronald Lewin find themselves in a delicate position over revealing the pain given and received by those whose lives they record.

Lest journalists be accused of jeering at historians, Philip Knightley of the *Sunday Times,* author of *The First Casualty,* put the war correspondent firmly at the bottom of the league-table of truth. He argued that the liberal, democratic, 'open' war-journalism of the West has been just as propagandist and distorting as the undisguised propaganda units formed by the western armies' opponents. That raised the question of the influence of war reporting on the outcome of Vietnam, which Knightley neatly answered by pointing out that as the US had not officially declared war, they could not declare censorship either, and the constitutional guarantees of access to information and freedom of speech remained in force. More subtly, he argued beyond that Vietnam was never seen (in the West) as a People's War that justified the committed and unquestioning reporting of the first and second world wars. Television, with its self-censorship, its small image and tendency to blur fact with fantasy is less of a threat to militarism than might be supposed, but Knightley forecast that on the next American military adventure journalists will not get the facilities and freedom they had in Vietnam. A grudging respect was shown for war photographers, as opposed to war journalists, for they took as many risks as the troops themselves; it was, however, pointed out that they also tended to encourage their subjects to take risks, and do little about the consequences.

Historically and imaginatively, Vietnam is only now coming into focus; it is clear to me that for want of other heroes, the war correspondents themselves will become the successors to the fighter pilots of 1940. The success of Michael Herr's *Dispatches* shows that they have the advantage of being authors of their own myth.

The military historians showed great respect for the imaginative writer's capacity to recreate the truth of war in a way that they cannot. John Harris, a prolific author of war novels, acknowledged that 'good war fiction is never history, but can be better than history'. In its treatment of people and their behaviour under extreme conditions, the novel can reconcile the objective and subjective. But that is no more than the virtue of all *realist* fiction, and no one seemed to know how to approach the post-realist methods of *Catch-22.* There was only a faint perception of the need for study of the relationship of literary myth to the facts of war.

In the case of war poetry, Andrew Rutherford questioned the genuine representativeness of poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon as spokesmen for those in the trenches, and it was pointed out that for all his pacifist poetry, Sassoon was a very aggressive officer in the front line. Unfortunately the issue became confused with grumbling from historians at the poets for suggesting that they weren't chaps who actually enjoyed the war. Such attacks on the critics of war betrayed the unconscious emotional commitment some military historians have to their subject. The influence of literary myth on the conduct o subsequent wars did get some acknowledgment, with the legend of T.E. Lawrence steering the behaviour of the Long Range Desert Group, or the officer advisors of the Balka partisans — although in their case M.R.D Foot made a careful distinction between th romantic perception of their own activities c those on the ground, and the political calcul tions of those manipulating them fro Whitehall.

It was left to Professor Dominick Grahar once adjutant at Sandhurst, now director of centre for conflict studies at a Canadi

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university, to underline the fascination of the subject of war: 'much bedside literature is about conflict — conflicts past are an escape from conflicts present.' Just as much contemporary military writing is obsessed with the first and second world wars, so the conference rarely strayed from the first half of the 20th century. But Graham pointed out how different the perceptions of the second world war are: for the British and Americans a victory of technology and *matériel*, for the inhabitants of occupied Europe a training in subversion and war by political means. This shadow war of intelligence and sabotage is becoming the newest subject of historical investigation. It is already, as the novels of Le Carré confirm, the subject of literary myth.

Nostalgia for the certainties of past conflicts makes military literature at all levels, from the pornography of violence upwards, a secure genre for publishers, but it obscures the need for a historical understanding of the conflicts of the present. Northern Ireland, where the army has a Brigadier with the official title 'Author, Northern Ireland', was hardly mentioned at all, though the would-be analysts of that and other contemporary conflicts point out the restrictions of the Official Secrets Act. As for the ultimate horror, Philip Knightley pointed out: 'in an all-out nuclear war there aren't going to be any war correspondents.' Nor any conferences on military literature!

Theatre

Christopher Edwards

Worm of Dissent

The Suicide *by* NIKOLAI ERDMAN *Warehouse*
Three More Sleepless Nights by CARYL CHURCHILL *Theatre Upstairs*

Written in 1930 this political satire on the Soviet system was accepted by both Meyerhold and Stanislavsky but production was refused when scenes were shown to senior party officials. This is another instance of life imitating art for the play has its own vigilant sentinel of the Revolution, an aspiring proletarian writer with the authoritative nom de plume 'thirty-five thousand postmen' who tells the poet: 'fit your metaphors to the regulations.' Erdman failed to obey this injunction and the play has never been produced in the Soviet Union.

The central character, Semyon, is an unemployed nonentity living with his wife and mother-in-law. Both his self-esteem and his sanity are cracking and so when he rushes off into the night it is assumed he is going to end it all. Word gets round fast and a neighbour who sees Semyon slipping a shiny tubular object into his pocket tries to talk him out of shooting himself, saying over and over again how wonderful life is. All Semyon has done is to take a piece of liver sausage from the kitchen but the rumour of his impending suicide has had a spectacular effect. Instead of the Samaritans coming round he finds himself besieged by intellectuals, writers, a pair of rival femmes fatales and a depressed butcher who represents the meat trade; all of them encourage him to go ahead and associate his act with one of their causes in order to get free publicity for their own grievances. As good Marxists they appreciate that there is no such thing as a free advert and combine to give him a banquet as a send-off before he pulls the trigger.

As one character says, what we need now are *dead* ideologues. There is a special irony here because, while everyone hopes that Semyon's 'martyrdom' will open public debate about, say, the inefficiency of the economy or the fettering of free expression; there are hushed references to the 'worm' of dissent which some of them also hope will come alive. This s a suggestive image which comes up several imes and looks forward to the sombre announcement at the end that a leading writer (whom we never see) has killed himself. The reference is to Erdman's contemporary Mayakovsky who really was driven 'underground' to express his opposition.

But Semyon is not a hero; he actually prefers liver sausage to revolvers and can't fire the gun. Instead he goes through the send-up of an Orthodox funeral before springing out of his coffin to apologise for being alive. Roger Rees makes Semyon a combination of fall-out comedian (appropriate to the large amount of farce in the play) and desperate little man making a passionate protest, one minute against the state, the next against his mother-in-law. Lela Kaya plays the part of this formidable female and embodies those slavonic female qualities one associates with the Urals — mass, resources and implacability What with her devotion to her Icons, Erdman must surely have intended her to stand for Old Mother Russia and when she draws her veil over her head to pray, she almost looks human.

The Suicide ranks with the best political satire in that its attacks seem part of its comic fabric and don't announce themselves as 'content'.

It is characteristic of Erdman's mordant humour (and also of his freedom from bigotry about the government per se) that when Semyon, the representative of Soviet individualism, rises from his coffin to announce that he is alive and well, none of the intelligentsia, writers etc, notices him at first; it is left to a deaf mute who faints at the sight. Semyon is to learn that collective duties still prevail, or that the only good Soviet individual is a dead one, when the frustrated mourners try to kick him to pieces, screaming that he owed it to society to do away with himself. In the end all he wants is the freedom to whisper that things can be hard, but the final scene indicates that this is asking too much. The set, with its 13 doors set next to one another, is only a punning reference to the rollicking entrances and exits of traditional farce; what it really suggests is a nightmare world peopled by informers, and the actors suggest just this when they take up their positions at the close, each one half in, half out of a door, as if a member of a team of frightened eavesdroppers.

Three More Sleepless Nights, a one-act dark comedy is set in a double-bed at around half-past two in the morning, but any suggestion that intimacies are taking place on stage would be misleading. In the first of the work's three parts the conjugal bower of Margaret and Frank becomes the scene of a marathon domestic row with both working-class competitors digging deep into their reserves of bile.

The couple argues at the tops of their voices, without listening to what the other is saying and seems to be pleading with an imaginary, deaf third-party (a Family Division Judge perhaps?) to agree with them. Frank is drunk, late home and unfaithful whereas Margaret is a Hausfrau with the belief (probably illusory) that she could create an independent personality for herself if only she got a job. Both of them throw out good caustic remarks but it's no use trying to listen in stereo, you need to concentrate on one part at a time in order to catch anything.

During a pause for breath the light goes out and comes up again on Pete and Dawn — young, middle-class and wearing expressions of pristine earnestness on their faces. It takes only a moment however to sense that their relations have gone unpleasantly wrong; true, the polyphonic squabbling has given way to sighs and helpless groans but Pete's form of psychological torture makes Frank's and Margaret's primitive jousting seem positively healthy.

Both the writing and the direction are particularly acute here. Dawn's supplicating looks and hushed pleas for attention insist that Pete comfort her; he sees it too, but chooses precisely those moments of maximum tension to draw her to him and explain, with scrupulous attention to every detail, the plot of some film he has just seen. Everything he says flies at a tangent to her feelings but the violence in the films he discusses is suggestive, both of what he does to her and what he forces her to do to herself; as he leans out of bed to extinguish the light, she stabs herself under the

Teresa Morley

Sunflower Harvest

In a dream I see
  a field of men
all dead
  and black
and hollow in surprise
  their bodies broken and still

in rows
  as if death ran at them in one
before they woke.
  In a myth I see
the mouth
  of the dragon
teeth
  drawn out and sown and set

and flowered
  a thousand goliaths
neck to sword
  and sword to neck. Shadows
convert
  the lane to a pit and from it
I stare
  in unbelief at recent wars.

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white sheets.

The sympathetic laughter provoked by these characters has its painful side and in the final scene you see how, even when the partners change round and Pete and Margaret have an affair, they find themselves repeating old patterns which seem to doom them to a destructive and circular domestic history. Caryl Churchill has come up with a slight but complete dramatic idea; it is also a pessimistic one.

Films

John Coleman

Take Off

Airplane! (A) *Plaza*
The Valiant Ones (AA) *Gate Two*
Rebecca (A) *Electric Cinema, from 10 August*

Anyone who has slumped with sinking heart through the four *Airport* movies, utterly grounded, praying for a whiff of laughing gas, should go instanter to the Plaza, where remedial treatment is available. The guffaw appreciative, after all, sounds healthier than the snigger camp. A while ago, three fellows called Jim Abrahams and David and Jerry Zucker sank their talents like mini-fangs into an enterprise in L.A., known for want of a reason as Kentucky Fried Theater. From this venture, which set out to detonate some popular TV shows and commercials, film trailers and films actual, via burlesque, there proceeded a cinematic event, *The Kentucky Fried Movie,* a canned record of variable sketches: at worst, it took a blowtorch to butterflies; at best, it skinned successful corpses, disrupted pieties. John Landis, later to make *National Lampoon's Animal House,* directed. This time, Jim and the Zucker twins have written and directed their own show, *Airplane!,* rockily based on *Zero Hour!* (1957) in fact, which was scripted by Arthur *(Airport)* Hailey and had half the passengers and all the crew on a jet plane stricken by food poisoning and a nervy ex-fighter pilot summoned to land the beast: Dana Andrews, that opulent dreamlady Linda Darnell, and Sterling Hayden starred. Those were the days.

Meanwhile, it has to be allowed that *Airplane!* — which has its fish-guzzling passengers and fliers collapse while the steak-eaters (among them a neurotic one-time pilot) survive — will go anywhere for a cackle, cachinnation, bellow, snigger or rictus. Good grief, its tailfin ploughs through wavy clouds to *Jaws* music behind the credits. Before boarding, the chief driver (Peter Graves) cruises through the airport lounge, stonily selecting from a shelf labelled WHACKING MATERIAL his copy of *Modern Sperm.* A male voice and a female wrangle alarmingly over the public address system. And so it goes. There is a dire literalism which has one flinching when a controller later talks of 'the shit hitting the fan': it does. That is the sophomoric vein weedily tapped, a sign of anxiety. But passim there are more hits than misses. A black co-pilot named Roger keeps saying, 'What?', during take-off instructions. 'We have clearance, Clarence,' spouts the captain, subsequently to get overheated when little Joey visits the controls, amorously into chat of gladiators and Turkish prisons. The point about bad taste is that it aims to rectify conventional notions of good taste, to return *idées reçues* with the scrawl 'not known at this address'. So the brave little sick girl on a drip-feed is regaled with a song sung by a stewardess using a guitar borrowed from a nun; and, as the human cargo beams at the loveliness of this raucous gesture, no one remarks that the kid's tube has been dislodged and she's, fish-mouthed, croaking.

Flashbacks awarded to the plain-scared, plane-scared young hero who is finally to land the crate and to his girl, stewardess number one, take a seaweed-necklaced mickey out of *From Here to Eternity* and an hilarious poke at Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever,* with the shaking flotsam of some sleazy tropical bar suddenly shaken into disco action: this tremendous, finely timed, surrealism that clicks. And, by the end, the randomness of the targets chosen ceases to concern. It is better to have laughed and lost a few than never to have laughed at all.

King Hu from Hong Kong is, one hazards, best known to those who know him for his long, balletic, pseudo-profound *A Touch of Zen,* invigorating when warring bodies leap, toss, whirl and tumble impossibly in a high, slim forest. He had troubles with his producers over that one and broke away into something like independence with *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1972). *The Valiant Ones* of two years later found him with a completely free hand and one could wish it contained more trumps. Set in a muddled period during his beloved Ming Dynasty, it draws — in many of its motions — on the traditions of Peking Opera stagecraft. It is no use pretending: Ming to me means vases and I have never been in the wings at Peking. Something to do with 16th century Chinese pirates and corrupt officials, in and out of cahoots; elegant shots of a boat between soaring cliffs, with the camera stretching, roaming their facades; a few magic fights, arrows zoning in, antagonists bunched and bouncing like crazed human parcels; and two sets of subtitles — one Chinese, the other elongated and appearing at quite wrong reading speeds for Western eyes. It would take a lifetime before I could claim more than a yawning acquaintance with such alien, alienating stuff. Joan Fontaine, nearer home, continues to lend odd credence to her role as the Manderley mouse in *Rebecca,* Hitchcock's first American film and arguably his least Hitchcockian, opening with *Notorious* a season of some of his works at the Electric. The NFT will be doing more of the same in due course.

Among this week's contributors:

PAUL PRESTON's books include *Spain in Crisis* and *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War.*

FRED STEWARD is a lecturer in the Technology Policy Unit at the University of Aston.

KERRY SCHOTT teaches economics at University College, London.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE and JULIAN BARNES are on holiday.

Weekend Competition

No 2629 **Set by Frank Shortstraw**

It's time to compensate for the dampness of this cricket season by paying tribute to those who support the game through thick and thin. May we please have a short ode (up to 16 lines) addressed to one of the following devotees of leather and willow: C.L.R. James, John Arlott, Tom Stoppard. By 22 August.

No 2626 **Set by Dan Kavanagh**

Anagrams of the names of NS contributors.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

Oh how you wrestled with Julian Barnes! How you tussled with Dan Kavanagh! Both proved impossible, and it seemed that the same would be true of Christopher Hitchens until Mr Fletcher submitted his brilliant solution. Most of the other NS contributors offered rich opportunities, which you gleefully seized. Congratulations to you all, and a pound for each anagram printed.

Christopher Hitchens: The short chi-chi NS rep.
Patrick Wintour: I part-work in TUC
David Caute: Caveat, I dud
Martin Amis: Am mini-star
Francis Wheen: Chief swanner

DAN FLETCHER

Tony Miles: Solemnity
Martin Amis: Martianism
Peter Conrad: Deprecator (n.)
Stuard Hood: Outdo trash
Roger Woddis: Did grow sore

CYRIL ANCHOR

Peter Conrad: Noted carper
Peter Conrad: Crap retoned

NIGEL ANDREW

Duncan Campbell: Cancel dumb plan

MAGGIE HOWE

Stuart Hall: All a-thrust
Edward Thompson: Do, do warn the MPs!
Tony Miles: It's only me

NINA HIBBIN

Martin Bailey: Liberty mania

GORDON LESSELL

Ralph Steadman: Phantasmal red

AMY SU

Gavin Ewart: A raving wet

RICHARD INGLEB

Arthur Marshall: Halts rural harm

MIRIAM FRIEDLANDE

Patrick Wintour & Julian Barnes: Journalist in wreck put in bar

DAVE H/

Tony Miles: Slimy Tone

BRENDA BRU

David Caute: Did vacuate

W.S. BROWN

Benedict Nightingale: A benighted gin client
Arthur Marshall: Hurrah! All smart
Peter Conrad: Creep! Rat! Don!

NICHOLAS MURI

Ralph Steadman: Ha! Smart pen, lad
Robin Blackburn: Unblock brain, R.B.

RHODA ELLI

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Hardy Amies: I am shy, dear
JOHN SWEETMAN

Bill Greenwell: Rebelling well
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Bruce Page: Bug a creep
Roger Woddis: God's worried
MARTIN SHERWOOD

Benedict Nightingale: Nice and gentle, big hit
Patrick Wintour: Puritan rock wit
Tony Miles: Not Smiley
Francis Wheen: Ran few inches
Paul Binding: Build in pang
HENRY JONES

Anna Coote & Patrick Wintour: Workin' up a reaction to cant
FRANK ANDERSON

Christopher Hird: Hit rich PR hordes
MAGGIE CROWCROFT

Tim Hopkins: PS I'm OK (hint)
TIM HOPKINS

Patrick Wintour: Wrap or tuck it in
MIKE MILLOTTE

Arthur Marshall: Small art, hurrah!
ROBERT EAGLE

Christopher Price: Heretic prods rich
RICHARD ANDREWS

Benedict Nightingale: I be needling th'acting
Roger Woddis: Rig ode words
GEOFF WORRALL

Anna Coote & Patrick Wintour: Ai! A no-truck-wit'-crap tone
SUSAN H. LLEWELLYN

Rob Rohrer: Bore? Horror!
MAY DAY

Roger Woddis: Oh dirge words!
MOLLY FITTON

Tony Miles

Chess

No 192 **May Problems**

The May problems were an entertaining selection.

In problem 178 (r7/4qlpk/6Rp/pR1pB/1P/5P2/8/5PK1/8) White's forces neatly squeeze a win with 1.R-B5! Now . . . QxR obviously fails to 2.RxPch and R-QB7ch so Black must find a defence to 2.R-B7. The obvious 1. . . R-R2 is nicely refuted by 2.R-B8! and Black cannot prevent 3.RxRPch! and 4.R-R8mate. 1. . . R-Q1 fails similarly to 2.R-B7, R-Q2; 3.R-B8 so Black is reduced to 1. . . R-KN1; 2.R-B7, Q-B1 as the only way to hold KN2. Clearly he is now in zugzwang; the only question is the precise method of running him out of pawn moves.

Various solvers claimed various sequences as 'correct' but as long as White doesn't do anything silly it doesn't seem to make much difference. One reasonable conclusion:- 3.R-R7, P-R5; 4.B-Q4, P-R6; 5.K-N1, P-R7; 6.K-N2, Q-N5 (any pawn moves just get taken); 7.BxP, Q-K5ch; 8.K-N3, Q-Q6ch; 9.P-B3 and that's goodnight from him.

Problem 179 (2r4k/P5b1/1p4p1/q6p/b1B1p3/Q3N3/8/1KR5) caused most trouble — NS solvers are traditionally of the endgame study type rather than the swindling-points-out-of-kiddies variety. It came from my notorious encounter with Nigel Short from London.

I know I said in my preamble that you should assume Black's first move was the "obvious co-operative one." However, it is still a real game, so I did not mean 'compose a help-mate.' Thus 1.N-B5?! B-R8?? 2.QxBch, K-R2; 3.Q-N7 mate did not get much credit (co-operative yes, but obvious???). 1.N-N4 was mildly plausible eg . . . PxN; 2.R-R1ch, B-R3; 3.Q-K7 but 1. . . QxP is also a fairly obvious reply after which White is not doing well. Also worth a try is 1.B-N3, RxRch; 2.QxR, QxP; 3.Q-B8ch, K-R2; 4.B-N8ch, K-R3; 5.Q-B1, P-KN4; 6.Q-R3, but Q-Q2 holds everything.

The solution is in fact 1.B-Q5! RxRch (this is co-operative: on 1. . . R-Q1 White still has plenty of problems). 2.QxR, QxP; 3.Q-B8ch, K-R2; 4.N-B5! This is the real point. White threatens Q-N8mate and 4. . . PxN; 5.QxPch, K-R3; 6.Q-B4ch is a perpetual as 6. . . K-N3?? 7.BxP is mate. Black's only remaining try is 4. . . B-K1 but even this proved inadequate: 5.NxB (this piece must be eliminated), Q-Q2; 6.QxB, QxB; 7.N-K6, Q-N6ch; 8.K-B1, Q-B6ch; 9.K-Q1, Q-B3 (necessary to stop the mate threats). Now on quiet moves Black maintains chances but White has yet another trick. 10.N-N5ch! QxN (else NxP draws easily); 11.Q-B7ch, K-R3; 12.Q-B8ch, K-R2; 13.Q-B7ch with a perpetual check.

Problem 180 (rlb3kl/pp5p/2plp3/4Pp2/2PlplPb/1P2P1N1/PB3KBq/R2Q1R2) was mildly gremlinised but fortunately the introduction was sufficient to deduce the correct position. Black is a whole R + N down but his Q and B cause a remarkable amount of trouble. The solution is drastic and elegant. 1.Q-Q8ch! Now . . . BxQ; 2.R-R1 regains the Q with a trivial win, and 1. . . K-N2; 2.QxB, QxQ; 3.PxP leaves White with a decisive material advantage and the attack.

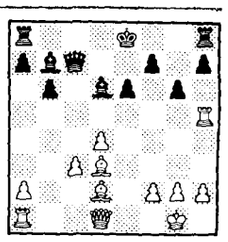
Problem 181 (q3kbQ1/1rn2rpl/3R1p2/2Blp3/4P3/5P2/N5P1/K1R5) came from Korchnoy — Gheorghiu London 80. Incredibly Korchnoy played 1.R-B6? and only drew. Instead 1.R-Q7! wins beautifully: 1. . . KxR; 2.QxRch or 1. . . RxR; 2.QxBmate. Apart from this, though, as Mr Sahasrabudhe points out, White can simply play 1.R(1)-Q1 (threatening R-Q8ch), R-N1 (the only defence); 2.R-Q7! also winning instantly — an astonishing miss!

Problem 182 (4rb2/1p1q1ppk/p1n1p2p/2p1Pn2/3PNR2/2P2K2/P2QBP2/6R1) came from an old, but to me not well-known, brilliancy. White mates by 1.RxN! PxR; 2.QxPch!! KxQ (. . . PxQ; 3.N-B6ch and R-N8mate); 3.R-R1ch, K-N3; 4.K-B4! (a nice touch, threatening B-R5ch x Pmate) Q-K3 (or R-K3), the only defence; 5.R-R8! and Black cannot prevent B-R5 mate.

Prizewinners: Mr Taylor £11, Mr McShechy £10, Mr Bradley £9, with consolation prizes of £3 each to Messrs Tindall, Sobey, Garfath, Nash, Deshmukh, Chand and Sahasrabudhe.

Problem 192

White to play continued 1.B-N5ch. Is this good, bad or interesting and how should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 20 August.

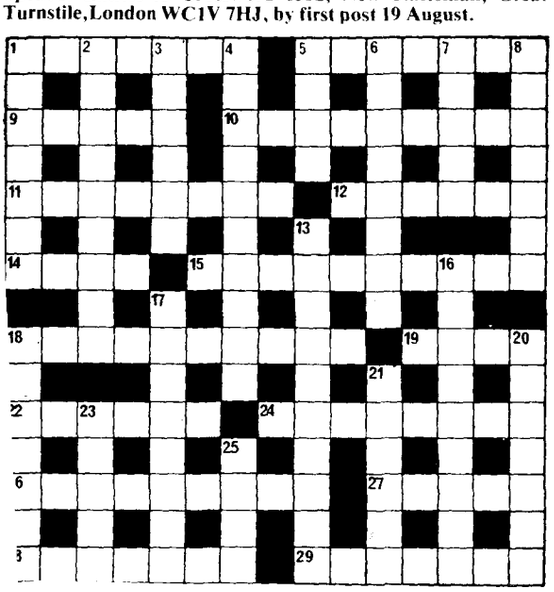


Solution to problem 190

1.RxR, PxR; 2.R-B5! Resigns. There is no good defence to the threatened R-R5ch.

Weekend Crossword 1352

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1352, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 19 August.



ACROSS

1 Desire and drink gets one five years! (7)
5 Father has a bad chest, but mends (7)
9 Approaches putting one organ inside another (5)
10 I work in a gallery to arouse interest (9)
11 Makes an investigation about broadcasting in a part of America (8)
12 Lancaster has to be surrounded by rugged tors (6)
14 It is the reverse of a joke to be senile (4)
15 Devices which give one success with a number of girls (10)
18 Town which is labouring with a heavy weight (10)
19 Love gives painful back (4)
22 Puts me in final, though most injured (6)
24 Entertainer suitable for southern holiday-maker (8)
26 Poet has crest with king in front of it (9)
27 Depart in some pain (5)
28 A parasite may be seen inside these garments (7)
29 Shaken when the river enters the outhouse (7)

DOWN

1 Human flesh as food (7)
2 Where vessels turn up with rage (9)
3 Platforms for cultural activities or climbing (6)
4 Complaints need stating in writing (10)
5 Ban climbing for trophies (4)
6 Explorer holds half of life to be a charm (8)
7 It's almost paradise so it's an effort to move (5)
8 Girl with funny hats and close-fitting dresses (7)
13 Skill which may make me so strained (10)
16 Where to keep a record of betting on the ring? (9)
17 Chinks could make us one with serfs (8)
18 Young animal makes tailless male run backwards (7)
20 Hurried round the line and distributed water (7)
21 Tough woman whose heart it is I tease (6)
23 Much seen in bars (5)
25 Poems held in good esteem (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 32

A	N	O	L	D	A	B	U	S	I	N	G			
H	A	R	E	A	H	Y	R	A	D	I	O			
S	I	H	V	N	A	G	A	G	O	L	F			
I	L	E	A	C	B	O	O	T	L	E	G			
L	E	R	N	E	A	N	C	O	A	X	O			
G	R	E	A	T	H	E	A	R	T	E	D			
N	E	W	S	T	H	E	A	T	R	E	S			
E	P	I	I	E	O	U	T	R	O	O	P			
S	A	L	A	D	I	N	I	N	U	L	A			
G	U	L	A	E	K	O	N	O	S	I	T			
N	A	B	O	B	E	R	G	T	H	A	I			
I	K	E	H	T	D	N	A	E	C	N	E			

Prizewinners to Salamanca 32

Miss F. Springer (Bideford)
Emily Walton (Birmingham)
Elizabeth Johnson (London SW3)

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ALDWYCH THEATRE Royal Shakespeare Company 836 6404. Recorded booking info 836 5332. cc 379 6233 (10-6, Sats 10-4). From Wed. 'Othello' 'I wouldn't have missed it for the world' S. Times. RSC also at The Warehouse in Brecht's 'Baal' 'So vivid and clear' Observer. RSC also at The Piccadilly Theatre in Hart and Kaufman's 'Once In A Lifetime' (ends 14 Aug.) and Pam Gems' 'Piaf' (ends 16 Aug.). From 19 Aug. at the Piccadilly in Willy Russell's 'hilarious' 'Educating Rita'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE, 722 9301. 'Writer's Cramp' by John Byrne. New production, director Robin Lefevre, with original cast Bill Paterson, John Bett & Alex Norton. Prevs. 8, 9, 11 Aug. 8 p.m. Tues. 12 Aug. 7 p.m. subs Mon.-Sat. 8 p.m. Sat. mat. 4.30.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 928 2252. Olivier (open stage): 'Galileo', 'Othello'; Lyttelton (proscenium stage): 'Death of a Salesman', 'The Elephant Man', 'The Browning Version'/'Harlequinade'; Cottesloe (small auditorium): 'Line 'Em'. See daily press for dates & times or ring recorded info. 928 2256.

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Meetings

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